



A black and white photograph of a dense thicket of leaves and branches, with the word "numinosum" overlaid in the center. The image is a close-up, showing a complex network of thin, dark branches and various leaves. Some leaves are in sharp focus, showing their veins and serrated edges, while others are blurred in the foreground and background, creating a sense of depth and texture. The lighting is dramatic, with strong highlights and deep shadows, emphasizing the intricate patterns of the foliage. The word "numinosum" is written in a clean, white, sans-serif font, centered horizontally and vertically over the image.

numinosum



Numinosum

It is important to have a secret, a premonition of things unknown.

It fills life with something impersonal, a *numinosum*.

— C. G. Jung, *Memories, Dreams, Reflections*

This album features works by composers for whom the conception and creation of music was intimately bound up with a religious attitude towards the world. Before the birth of aesthetics in the 18th century, the symbolic or “external” meanings of music resided in the music itself; neither its expressiveness nor its purpose as an integral part of social and religious rituals were separated from a larger context of moral and spiritual considerations. In this sense, although their tonal languages and forms differ greatly, later composers such as Liszt, Franck and Messiaen followed the spirit of Bach, reflecting a musical philosophy in which musical means and theological ends were deeply intertwined, if not one and the same.

What impact does a greater awareness of the symbolic realities of religious thought, which inspired the music in the first place, have on how we — the interpreter and the listener — hear the music, and what meanings we find within it? In the accompanying essay on the following pages, I offer some observations about the program and

about art more generally from a philosophical and metaphysical perspective. I propose that the experience of art — which, like the religious experience, is an encounter with the world and the inexplicable — has the potential of challenging the boundaries between self and other.

In those instances where the pull towards something other is of such magnitude that it renders the self utterly powerless and will-less, we are in the presence of the *numinosum*. The numinous quality resides in the phenomenon itself and is a dynamic force that takes hold of and acts upon the subject. The word derives from the Latin *numen*, meaning ‘divine power’ or ‘spirit’, and was coined by Rudolf Otto in his book *Das Heilige*, which explores the non-rational elements underpinning personal belief, and the role that spontaneous, immediate experiences play in this respect. In its adjective form, the numinous evokes the words luminous and ominous; it hints at both emanating light and at the overwhelming sense of the unknown.

The recording of the album took place in the winter of 2020 in a church on the remote Lofoten Islands in Northern Norway. During the so-called *mørketid* — literally “dark-time” or dark season — the light which illuminates the skies from below the horizon for only a few hours a day holds a greater meaning. This atmosphere was, I believe, very appropriate to this particular music, and certainly had an impact on the sessions. In the North, the sense that light acquires its significance

Joachim Carr

The Norwegian pianist Joachim Carr has over the past few years established himself as one of the most exciting musicians to emerge from Scandinavia.

He is the winner of several international prizes, including the First Prize, the Audience Award as well as the Orchestra Prize of the Bergen Philharmonic at the 14th International Edvard Grieg Piano Competition in 2014. The previous year, he had received the *coup de coeur* Prize for his recital at the 25th Concours Clara Haskil. Following his debut recital at the Oslo University Aula in 2015 – a long-standing tradition in Norwegian musical life – he received the Robert Levin Prize. For several years, he has also been a recipient of the Norwegian Government Grant for Artists.

A versatile chamber musician, he won several prizes in duo and trio formations, most notably the First Prizes

from its absence or negation is more visceral. If darkness is the great unknown, something without properties and beyond measurement, its meta-physical presence is often what inspires the more immediate qualities of experience. And as illumination stands forth in contrast with the obscure, it is also within the unknown that possibility and becoming lie.

Joachim Carr

at the 10th Concours International de Musique de Chambre de Lyon and at the Boris Pergamenschikow Prize for contemporary chamber music in Berlin. His chamber music partners have included Antje Weithaas, Radovan Vlatkovic, Lars Anders Tomter, Bruno Philippe, Hayoung Choi, Ingrid Fliter, Bertrand Chamayou and the Doric String Quartet.

As a recitalist and in various chamber music formations he has performed at the Klavierfestival Ruhr, Zermatt Festival, Bergen International Festival, Lofoten Piano Festival, Rosendal Chamber Music Festival, Bach Festival Moscow, PODIUM Festival Esslingen, Festspiele Mecklenburg-Vorpommern and Salzburger Kammermusikfestival.

With concerto repertoire, he has appeared with the Royal Stockholm Philharmonic, the Lithuanian

State Symphony Orchestra, the Trondheim Symphony Orchestra, the Arctic Philharmonic and the Norwegian Radio Orchestra, collaborating with conductors such as Alexander Vedernikov, Gintaras Rinkevicius, Miguel Harth-Bedoya, Arvid Engegård, Eivind Aadland and Bjarte Engeset. At the closing concert of the Bergen International Festival in 2017, he had the honour of performing the Grieg Concerto with the Bergen Philharmonic under John Storgårds.

Born 1988 in Bergen, Carr received important musical impulses in his youth from pianists Jan Henrik Kayser, Håvard Gimse and Leif Ove Andsnes. After studies at the Barratt Due Institute of Music in Oslo with Czech pedagogue Jiri Hlinka, he moved to Berlin and continued his postgraduate studies with Eldar Nebolsin at the Hochschule für Musik “Hanns Eisler”.

In later years he has received invaluable advice from Ferenc Rados and Rita Wagner.

His debut album for Claves Records, released in 2014, and featuring early works by Schumann, Brahms and Berg was highly praised by critics, receiving the *5 Diapason* accolade by the French magazine. He has since recorded for Naxos (works by Liszt and Halfdan Cleve); and for Avi- music (Live Recordings, Klavierfestival Ruhr).

Apart from performing the classical repertoire, with a special emphasis on the Romantic and early 20th century epochs, he is committed to including his own improvisations into concert programs. He regularly cooperates with jazz and folk musicians, and is also a member of the Glorvigen Tango Quartet.

Numinosum

Es ist wichtig, dass wir ein Geheimnis haben und die Ahnung von etwas nicht Wissbarem. Es erfüllt das Leben mit etwas Unpersönlichem, einem *Numinosum*.

— C. G. Jung, *Erinnerungen, Träume, Gedanken*

Dieses Album umfasst Werke von Komponisten, für welche die Auffassung und das Schaffen von Musik eng mit einer religiösen Einstellung zur Welt verbunden waren. Vor der Entstehung der Ästhetik im 18. Jahrhundert lag die Symbolik oder die »äussere« Bedeutung der Musik in der Musik selbst; ihre Ausdruckskraft und ihre Bestimmung als wesentlicher Bestandteil sozialer und religiöser Riten standen in einem grösseren Kontext von moralischen und geistigen Überlegungen. In diesem Sinne folgten spätere Komponisten wie Liszt, Franck und Messiaen, auch wenn sich ihre musikalischen Sprachen und Formen stark voneinander unterscheiden, dem Geiste Bachs und spiegelten eine Philosophie wider, in der musikalische Mittel und theologische Ziele untrennbar miteinander verwoben, wenn nicht gar ein und dasselbe waren.

Welche Auswirkung hat ein tieferes Bewusstsein für die symbolische Realität des religiösen

Denkens, das die Musik ursprünglich inspiriert hat, auf die Art und Weise, wie wir – der Interpret und der Zuhörer – die Musik hören, und auf die Bedeutungen, die wir in ihr finden? Im begleitenden Essay auf den folgenden Seiten (auf Englisch) stelle ich einige Überlegungen zum Programm und zur Kunst im Allgemeinen an, und zwar aus einer philosophischen und metaphysischen Perspektive. Ich stelle die Hypothese auf, dass die Erfahrung von Kunst – die, wie die religiöse Erfahrung, eine Begegnung mit der Welt und dem Unerklärbaren ist – das Potenzial in sich birgt, die Grenzen zwischen dem Selbst und dem Anderen zu hinterfragen.

In jenen Momenten, in denen der Drang hin zu etwas Anderem so stark ist, dass er das Selbst völlig macht- und willenlos macht, befinden wir uns in der Gegenwart des *Numinosum*. Die Natur des Numinosen liegt im Phänomen selbst begründet und ist eine dynamische Kraft, die jemanden erfasst

und auf ihn einwirkt. Das Wort ist abgeleitet aus dem lateinischen *numen*, »göttlicher Wille« oder »Geist«, und wurde von Rudolf Otto in seinem Buch *Das Heilige* geprägt, in dem er die nicht-rationalen Elemente untersucht, die dem persönlichen Glauben zugrunde liegen, und die Rolle beleuchtet, die spontane, unmittelbare Erfahrungen in diesem Zusammenhang spielen. In seiner adjektivischen Form erinnert das Numinose an die Wörter luminös und ominös; so klingt in »numinos« sowohl »ausstrahlendes Licht« als auch »überwältigendes Gefühl angesichts des Unbekannten« an.

Die Aufnahmen für dieses Album fanden im Winter 2020 in einer Kirche in den abgelegenen Lofoten-Inseln im Norden Norwegens statt. Während der sogenannten *Mørketid* – wörtlich »Dunkelzeit« oder dunkle Jahreszeit – kommt dem Licht, das den

Himmel nur wenige Stunden am Tag von unterhalb des Horizonts erhellt, eine grössere Bedeutung zu. Ich glaube, diese Stimmung passte sehr gut zu dieser besonderen Musik, und sie hatte sicherlich einen Einfluss auf die Aufnahme. Im Norden ist das Gefühl, dass das Licht seine Bedeutung aus seiner Abwesenheit oder Negation bezieht, viel instinktiver. Wenn die Dunkelheit die grosse Unbekannte ist, etwas ohne Eigenschaften und jenseits von Massstäben, so ist ihre metaphysische Präsenz oft das, was die unmittelbareren Merkmale der Erfahrungen prägt. Und so, wie das Licht im Gegensatz zur Dunkelheit steht, liegen auch die Möglichkeit und das Werden im Bereich des Unbekannten.

*Joachim Carr
aus dem Englischen von Gabriela Zehnder*

Joachim Carr

Der norwegische Pianist Joachim Carr hat sich über die vergangenen Jahre als einer der aufregendsten skandinavischen Künstler etabliert. Er gewann diverse internationale Preise, u. a. den Ersten Preis, Publikumspreis, sowie Sonderpreis des Bergen Philharmonischen Orchesters beim 14. Klavierwettbewerb "International Edvard Grieg Competition". Im Jahr zuvor hatte er bereits den *Coup de Coeur* Preis für sein Recital beim 25. "Concours Clara Haskil" gewonnen. Im Anschluss an sein Debütkonzert

2015 in der Aula der Osloer Universität – eine lange Tradition im norwegischen Musikerleben - erhielt Carr den Robert Levin Preis. Er ist zudem langjähriger Empfänger des "Norwegian Government Grant" für Künstler.

Als vielseitiger Kammermusiker gewann er diverse Auszeichnungen in Duo- und Trioformation, insbesondere Erste Preise beim "10th Concours International de Musique de Chambre de Lyon" und

dem "Boris Pergamenschikow Preis" für zeitgenössische Kammermusik in Berlin. Antje Weithaas, Radovan Vlatkovic, Lars Anders Tomter, Bruno Philippe, Hayoung Choi, Ingrid Fliter, Bertrand Chamayou und das Doric String Quartet zählen zu seinen Kammermusikpartnern.

Mit Solo-Recitals und in verschiedenen Kammermusikformationen trat Carr unter anderem beim Klavierfestival Ruhr, Zermatt Festival, Bergen International Festival, Lofoten Klavier Festival, Rosendal Kammermusikfestival, Bach Festival Moscow, PODIUM Festival Esslingen, den Festspielen Mecklenburg-Vorpommern und dem Salzburger Kammermusikfestival auf.

Als Solist konzertierte er u. a. mit dem Königlichen Philharmonischen Orchester Stockholm, dem Litauischen Nationalorchester, dem Trondheim Symphonieorchester, dem Norwegischen Rundfunk-Orchester und dem Norwegian Arctic Philharmonic Orchestra. In diesem Rahmen arbeitete er mit renommierten Dirigenten wie Alexander Vedernikov, Gintaras Rinkevicius, Miguel Harth-Bedoya, Arvid Engegård, Eivind Aadland und Bjarte Engeset zusammen. Beim Abschlusskonzert des Bergen International Festival 2017 hatte er die Ehre, das Grieg Klavierkonzert mit dem Bergen Philharmonischen Orchester unter John Storgårds zu konzertieren.

Carr wurde 1988 in Bergen geboren. In seiner Jugend erhielt er wichtige musikalische Impulse von den Pianisten Jan Henrik Kayser, Håvard Gimse und Leif Ove Andsnes. Nach Studien am Barratt Due Institute of Music in Oslo mit dem tschechischen Pädagogen Jiri Hlinka setzte Carr seine Ausbildung mit Eldar Nebolsin an der Hochschule für Musik "Hanns Eisler" in Berlin fort. Weitere künstlerische Anregungen erhielt er von Ferenc Rados und Rita Wagner.

Im Jahre 2014 veröffentlichte er sein Debutalbum mit Claves Records mit frühen Werken von Schumann, Brahms und Berg. Von Kritikern gerühmt erhielt das Album 5 Diapason, eine hohe Auszeichnung des französischen Magazins DIAPASON. Zudem nahm er für Naxos Werke von Liszt und Halfdan Cleve auf und veröffentlichte mit Avi-music Live-Aufnahmen vom Klavierfestival Ruhr.

Neben dem klassischen Repertoire – vor allem der Romantik und dem frühen 20. Jahrhundert – widmet sich Carr anderen Genres und arbeitet regelmäßig mit Jazz- und Folkmusikern zusammen. Er verfolgt den Anspruch, eigene Improvisationen in seine Konzertprogramme zu integrieren. Zudem ist er Mitglied des Glorvigen Tango Quartetts.

Numinosum

Il est important que nous ayons un secret, et l'intuition de quelque chose d'inconnaissable. Ce mystère emplit la vie d'une nuance d'impersonnel, d'un numineux.

– C. G. Jung, *Ma vie. Souvenirs, rêves et pensées*

Cet enregistrement présente des œuvres de compositeurs pour lesquels la conception et la création musicale étaient intimement liées à une attitude religieuse à l'égard du monde. Avant la naissance de l'esthétique au XVIII^e siècle, les significations symboliques ou « externes » de la musique résidaient dans la musique elle-même ; ni son expressivité ni sa finalité en tant que partie intégrante des rituels sociaux et religieux n'étaient séparées d'un contexte plus large de considérations morales et spirituelles. En ce sens, des compositeurs ultérieurs à Bach tels que Liszt, Franck et Messiaen ont suivi l'esprit de leur prédécesseur, bien que leurs langages tonals et leurs formes soient très différents. Ils reflètent une philosophie musicale dans laquelle les moyens musicaux et les fins théologiques sont profondément liés, voire identiques.

Quel impact une plus grande prise de conscience des réalités symboliques de la pensée religieuse, qui

a inspiré la musique en premier lieu, a-t-elle sur la façon dont nous – interprète et auditeur – percevons la musique et sur les significations que nous y trouvons ? Dans l'essai (en anglais) présenté dans les pages qui suivent, je propose quelques observations concernant le programme et l'art en général d'un point de vue philosophique et métaphysique. Je suggère que l'expérience de l'art – qui, tout comme l'expérience religieuse, est une rencontre avec le monde et l'inexplicable – a le potentiel de remettre en question les frontières entre le Soi et l'Autre.

Dans les cas où l'attraction vers quelque chose d'autre est d'une telle magnitude qu'elle rend le Soi complètement impuissant et sans volonté, nous sommes en présence du numineux. La qualité numineuse réside dans le phénomène lui-même et est comme une force dynamique qui s'empare du sujet et agit sur lui. Le mot vient du latin *numen*, qui signifie « puissance divine » ou « esprit ». Il a été

créé par Rudolf Otto dans *Das Heilige*, ouvrage qui explore les éléments non rationnels qui sous-tendent la croyance personnelle et le rôle que jouent à cet égard les expériences spontanées et immédiates. Dans sa forme adjectivale, numineux évoque les mots lumineux et alarmant ; il fait à la fois allusion à la lumière qui émane et au sentiment accablant de l'inconnu.

L'enregistrement de l'album a eu lieu au cours de l'hiver 2020 dans une église située dans les lointaines îles Lofoten, au nord de la Norvège. Pendant ce qu'on appelle *le mørketid* – littéralement la « période d'obscurité » ou saison sombre – la lumière venant d'en-dessous de l'horizon qui illumine le ciel pendant quelques heures par jour seulement revêt une plus

Joachim Carr

Au cours des dernières années, le pianiste norvégien Joachim Carr s'est imposé comme l'un des artistes les plus passionnants de la scène scandinave.

Il a remporté plusieurs distinctions internationales, dont le premier prix, le prix du public et le prix spécial de l'Orchestre Philharmonique de Bergen dans le cadre du 14^e Concours international de piano Edvard Grieg. L'année précédente, il avait déjà reçu le prix *Coup de cœur* pour son récital lors du 25^e Concours Clara Haskil. En 2015, à l'issue du concert marquant ses débuts à l'auditorium de l'Université d'Oslo – une longue tradition dans la vie musicale

grande signification. Cette atmosphère était, je crois, très appropriée à cette musique particulière, et a certainement eu un impact sur les sessions d'enregistrement. Dans le Nord, le sentiment que la lumière acquiert son importance à travers son absence ou sa négation est plus viscéral. Si l'obscurité est le grand inconnu, quelque chose sans propriétés et au-delà de la mesure, sa présence métaphysique est souvent ce qui inspire les qualités plus immédiates de l'expérience. Et comme l'illumination contraste avec l'obscurité, c'est aussi dans l'inconnu que se trouvent le possible et le devenir.

Joachim Carr

Traduit de l'anglais par Michelle Bulloch, MUSITEXT

norvégienne – Carr s'est vu décerner le prix Robert Levin. Il a également été bénéficiaire plusieurs années durant de la Bourse pour artistes du gouvernement norvégien.

Comme musicien de chambre d'une grande polyvalence, il a remporté diverses distinctions en duo et trio, notamment le premier prix du 10^e Concours International de Musique de Chambre de Lyon et le Prix Boris Pergamenchikov pour la musique de chambre contemporaine à Berlin. Parmi ses partenaires de musique de chambre, il compte des artistes tels que Antje Weithaas, Radovan Vlatkovic,

Lars Anders Tomter, Bruno Philippe, Hayoung Choi, Ingrid Fliter, Bertrand Chamayou et le Doric String Quartet.

Joachim Carr s'est produit comme récitaliste et au sein de différentes formations de musique de chambre dans nombre de festivals dont le Klavierfestival Ruhr, le Zermatt Festival, le Bergen International Festival, le Lofoten Pianofestival, le Festival de musique de chambre Rosendal, le Bach Festival de Moscou, le PODIUM Festival Esslingen, les Festspiele Mecklenburg-Vorpommern et le Festival de musique de chambre de Salzbourg.

Comme soliste, il s'est notamment produit avec l'Orchestre Philharmonique Royal de Stockholm, l'Orchestre National de Lituanie, l'Orchestre Symphonique de Trondheim, l'Orchestre de la Radio Norvégienne et le Norwegian Arctic Philharmonic Orchestra. Dans ce cadre, il a travaillé avec des chefs d'orchestre renommés comme Alexander Vedernikov, Gintaras Rinkevicius, Miguel Harth-Bedoya, Arvid Engegård, Eivind Aadland et Bjarte Engeset. Lors du concert de clôture du Festival international de Bergen en 2017, il a eu l'honneur de jouer le *Concerto pour piano* de Grieg avec l'Orchestre Philharmonique de Bergen sous la direction de John Storgårds.

Né à Bergen en 1988, Joachim Carr a bénéficié au cours de sa jeunesse d'impulsions musicales de la part des pianistes Jan Henrik Kayser, Håvard Gimse et Leif Ove Andsnes. Après des études au Barratt Due Institute of Music à Oslo avec le pédagogue tchèque Jiri Hlinka, Carr a poursuivi sa formation auprès d'Eldar Nebolsin à la Haute école de musique Hanns Eisler de Berlin. Il a en outre bénéficié des conseils prodigués par Ferenc Rados et Rita Wagner.

En 2014, il a sorti chez Claves Records son premier enregistrement dédié à des œuvres de jeunesse de Schumann, Brahms et Berg. L'album a été salué par la critique et a reçu 5 Diapasons, prestigieuse distinction du magazine français DIAPASON. Pour Naxos, il a également enregistré des œuvres de Liszt et Halfdan Cleve et a publié chez Avi-music des enregistrements live du Festival de piano de la Ruhr.

En plus du répertoire classique – notamment le romantisme et le début du XX^e siècle – Carr se consacre à d'autres genres et collabore régulièrement avec des musiciens de jazz et de folk. Il poursuit l'ambition d'intégrer ses propres improvisations dans ses programmes de concert. Il est par ailleurs membre du Glorvigen Tango Quartett.



ON THE SENSORY AND METAPHYSICAL REALITIES OF MUSIC
(AND SOME THOUGHTS ON THE PROGRAM)

AN ESSAY IN THREE PARTS

On music as sensory time

Immediacy is reality; language is ideality; consciousness is contradiction. The moment I make a statement about reality, contradiction is present, for what I say is ideality.
– Søren Kierkegaard, *Johannes Climacus* (1843)

Movement is reality itself.
– Henri Bergson, *The Creative Mind* (1946)

Attending to a work of art, we relate to it either as an object – a painting, for instance – or in the case of music, as a process. Whereas we see an object as inhabiting a quality of permanence, we think of a process as something which is subject to continuous change over time. However, these distinctions crumble in view of a larger timescale: just as a building, raised by humans, will decay over time and at some point succumb to the forces of nature, so will mountains, initially pushed upwards by the geological forces of plate tectonics, forever be subject to the erosive processes of water, ice and gravity, and will eventually be transformed into plains. No object, then, truly exists in isolation, but rather becomes a *thing* through our relation to time. At the end of the day, whether we see a phenomenon as transitory or stable has little to do with time itself, and everything to do with us: it is our embodied duration in time which brings about all the forms and appearances in the world as we perceive them by the senses, and, in turn, makes a recognition of these very forms possible. But fundamentally, only change is permanent, and permanence – as we think of it – is an illusion.

In German, different forms of knowing are distinguished through the words *kennen*, which is the lived and experienced “knowing of” a person or a place, and *wissen*, which means knowledge or a “knowing about” things and facts. The former is *becoming*, a knowing which incorporates a past and a future; the latter a knowledge separated and abstracted from time. In the Scandinavian languages, there is an even further connotation: the word *kjenne/känna* means both “to know” and “to touch/feel”, which hints at the unique kind of knowing that can only be acquired through embodied, relational experiences – a knowing that relies on a concrete *betweenness*.

Naturally, when we reiterate a line in a poem, or give a painting a second look, the repetition reveals different aspects to the experience given how distinct memories and expectations add layers to perception. Yet what is more paradoxical is that the initial experience is transformed as well, making an actual iteration impossible. We experience what is expressed by the saying, *nothing ever happens twice, precisely because it has happened already* – a phenomenon which in music is almost tangible. The repetition of a phrase, in words, might appear superfluous or even tiresome, but a melody heard for a second time amplifies the impact: we long to hear it again. While music remains in immediacy, words, when repeated, are especially prone to be abstracted and reflected upon consciously.

When, in the settings of poetry to music, a composer such as Schubert departs from the original and we hear, within a musical moment, the reiteration of a few words, the effect is not so much rhetorical, but rather a sense of lingering in time. It is as if the movement of time itself slows down, as if we are revisiting a moment in time we never fully left. This prolongation of sensory time also takes more active forms, such as when Bach in a cantata movement extends a word of significance with an endless melisma; although there is ceaseless movement, we must stay with the word and its implications. In music, what unfolds is felt less as a succession of events and more as a deepening of experience itself. Allowing ourselves, for the moment, to succumb to a spatial metaphor, music reveals to our awareness a sense that time inhabits not only a horizontal dimension, but a vertical one as well.

For Henri Bergson, the experiential passage of time – he calls it *la durée*, which can be translated as *duration* – is fundamentally different from scientific, objective clock-time. The latter cannot account for the actual movement of time itself, and its discrete units and markers along an imaginary timeline derive from thinking about time in terms of space. True duration, on the other hand, involves a progression of the past into the present, a continuous co-existence and interpenetration of the present and the past; its character marked not so much by simultaneousness as by flow, an ever-changing flux. Bergson uses the example of the melodic line to illustrate how time can be thought of as *succession without distinction*: “When we listen to a melody we have the purest impression of succession we could possibly have – an impression as far removed as possible from that of simultaneity – and yet it is the very continuity of the melody and the impossibility of breaking it up which make that impression upon us.”

Imagine the everyday experience of walking along the streets, or in nature, while listening to music through headphones: immediately, the music takes hold of the mind and makes up the primary, perceptive reality – a seabed with musical stirrings and currents – through which other sense impressions must flow. The visual world with its objects and appearances now seems secondary, as if reflected in the music and imbued with a peculiar softness. This previously unknown fluidity which spills over to the field of vision comes down to, so it seems, how we, through sound – as opposed to through vision and light – perceive time. Through sound and music, we *sense* time in an altogether different way: music makes time audible.

Vision operates within a medium of distance, in which light may enter. When something is too near, it remains in obscurity. It is the distance itself that allows for an overview in which differentiation and comparison of discrete elements can take place, which in turn bring about clarity. Sound, on the other hand – although it travels over distances – is transmitted in ways resembling those of touch; the physical boundary is non-existent as vibrations in the air touch the inner ear. While the imagination of the inner eye tends to perceive of things from above, the creativity of the ears unfolds from within. The knowing that takes place through the sense of touch, or through hearing, can never be fully enlightened, it is a knowing that is suggestive, that seeks completion and wholeness within imagination. In some sense, it stays in the dark, while the promise it holds is kindled with the light of a future.

Of our conceptual tendency to escape temporality, Bergson writes: “It is not the ‘states’, simple snapshots we have taken once again along the course of change, that are real; on the contrary, it is flux, the continuity of transition, it is change itself that is real. This change is indivisible, it is even substantial.” We commonly imagine the possibility of beholding an image in our minds, to observe it outside of time and space, not unlike the manner in which a film, as we pause it, *freezes* on a single image. But the absurdity is apparent when we consider music: to capture and hold a moment in music, we would need to capture time itself too. A *frozen* moment in music is nothing but the very negation of it – an impossible silence. And as we step into Heraclitus’ river, the discreteness and thingness of time dissolve, and the flow of reality is mirrored in the stream of our consciousness.

Since making sense of that which is heard at the present moment can only be done in the context of the past, and in the context of what is yet to be heard, no moment in music *meaningfully* exists in itself – at the very least, it relates to silence. The potentiality (and therefore, perception) of a musical event is forever bound up with a time greater than the measured, discrete time it seemingly occupies. But perhaps our instinctive presence in time is not altogether different from the time that music inhabits; after all, memory and expectation are always present at the initial stages of perception.

To our eyes, the combination of two distinct colors yields a third which is unlike its predecessors. By combining two notes, what we hear is a quality, an interval, yet we can still, given sufficient “distance” between the notes, tell them apart. The quality of the interval emanates from somewhere in the relation, as if musical form is emancipated from matter and its meanings lie entirely in *betweenness*. We may also express the relationship between two notes and their fundamental frequencies in mathematical terms, and discover that, to our ears, the perceived degree of harmony and consonance mysteriously correlate with the simplicity of the whole number ratios: the relation 2:1 making up the octave, 3:2 a fifth, 5:4 a major third, and so on.

Even a single tone receives its particular quality first and foremost from the relationships and proportions between the audible sounds of its overtones. The immediate recognition of its timbre, of what is essentially pure form unfolding in space-time, happens entirely beyond our conscious awareness. It is somewhat akin to the experience of color, which also defies any description in language except through metaphor. Fundamentally, this immediate knowing is not reducible to knowledge about the attributes and components of a phenomenon: the knowledge which re-presents separate parts to perception and pulls them out – abstracts them – from the reality in which we initially experienced them as whole.

Søren Kierkegaard writes that immediacy, as a state beyond self-aware consciousness, is precisely *indeterminateness*. Attuned to the flux, we sense that the very quality of that which appears acquires its vividness from the manner in which it is continuously born into renewed life through the indeterminate, fluctuating relations with all that it comes *in touch* with. The implication of this relational, dynamic way of thinking, is that the relations in themselves become that which creates and conditions the qualities (and even properties) of all the phenomena we experience in the world, of all that stands out as objects and forms of some kind. In other words, it is the relations, not the *relata*, which bring about immediate reality.

It seems to be the rational tendency of the mind to make sense of a phenomenon in terms of how it can be understood in relation to what is already known, and so it connects and associates it with familiar concepts. In music, the challenge, for the performer as well as for the listener, becomes to not distort the essential quality of what we hear through comparisons, in which the distinctions and similarities are conceptualized to constitute the very objects of attention, and everything beyond – the unique, the unclassifiable, the potential of what is yet not known – stays outside the scope of our imagination. In some way or another, in order for there to be any “knowing”, a recognition must take place in which we relate new perceptions to some sort of pre-existing inner content in our minds. But the question remains: which faculties of the mind have a greater potential for recognizing that which in its nature is elusive and which may never be fully grasped? Perhaps, in relation to art and music, rather than relying predominantly on consciously acquired knowledge, we must trust our capacity for knowing in the sense of *kennen* as well as in the very tangible sense of *kjenne/känna*. Then, by inviting the unconscious to participate in an undisturbed manner, we engage in a process more reminiscent of the way in which we relate to another human being.

On religious and metaphysical ideas in music

As I have learned by experience, there is a secret hidden power in the text themselves; so that to one who ponders on things divine and turns them over carefully and seriously in his mind, in some way, I cannot tell how, the aptest numbers [i.e. counterpoint] occur, as if of their own accord...

– William Byrd, Preface to *Gradualia* (1610)

[Music] expresses the metaphysical to everything physical in the world, the thing-in-itself to every phenomenon. Accordingly, we could just as well call the world embodied music as embodied will; this is the reason why music makes every picture, indeed every scene from real life and from the world, at once appear in enhanced significance and this is, of course, all the greater, the more analogous its melody is to the inner spirit of the given phenomenon.

– Arthur Schopenhauer, *The World as Will and Representation* (1818)

Throughout history, philosophers and religious thinkers have regarded the sensuous, affective powers of music – leaving little room for reason to intervene – as a threat to the contemplation of transcendental ideas and of the divine. According to Plato, all objects and phenomena as we experience them are but imperfect instantiations of the eternal Ideas or Forms – the immaterial archetypes beyond all things. Appearances in themselves, as revealed to us through our fallible senses, cannot be the adequate sources of true knowledge given their ceaseless changeability. Our senses are inadequate for recognizing where *brightness* begins and *darkness* ends, and an object we see as inhabiting the quality of beauty today may disintegrate and lose its *beautiffulness* in the near future.

There is an implied duality in Plato's metaphysical vision: the world as perceived through the senses is a sort of dream world, whereas the world of the immutable Ideas constitutes a reality on a higher ontological level beyond time and space, a reality intelligible only through pure knowledge. Yet, the worlds do coincide, something of the Idea is immanent in all that we perceive; after all, the Ideas are what enables us to identify the properties of phenomena in the world and to have knowledge of their qualities. To see something as *good*, we must acknowledge the presence of the eternal Idea of *goodness* within it.

In Plato's insistence on the value of seeing beyond representations, there is a caution to not blindly accept apparent categorizations of how things relate to one another. Since no phenomena in the world appear to

us exactly alike, their true nature cannot be induced from a relative comparison to other phenomena which, on the surface, seem identical. While concepts are invented and reside within our minds, true knowledge is discovered through our recognition of the Idea within things, of an insight into their essence. Here, Plato's philosophy of knowledge converges with theological ideas: rather than observing the categorical one over many, we must strive to see the presence of the one *within* the many.

In the *Republic*, the philosophers voice their concern about the potentially corruptive power of music and the influence it can have upon weaker minds by leading them astray from reason. Plato points out, in Socrates' voice (which is somewhat ironic), that poetry is assimilation to something or someone else, as when, in the *Iliad*, Homer speaks "through" other voices and adopts their characteristics. It follows, then, that the arts speak of something other, not of what they are. Poetry and music are *mimesis* – imitations of the phenomenal world – and thereby even further removed from the true world of the Ideas.

Yet in Plato's description of an ideal society, music is deemed ethically beneficial: its role is to aid the listener in the appreciation for beauty and the cultivation of goodness, with the implication that its modes and rhythmical characteristics must conform strictly to the moral message of the words. It is perhaps worth keeping in mind, regarding the inherent skepticism towards music and its ability to convey truths, that, for the ancient Greeks, all the arts were social acts; poetry and music were always meant for the ears and not for the eyes. No separation existed as of yet between art itself and the artists who performed and recited it, rendering it – from the philosophers' viewpoint – morally corruptible.

In *Confessions*, Saint Augustine – one of the early Fathers of the Church and someone for whom Neo-Platonism exerted a great influence – recounts the moment of his conversion. Alone in the gardens, he hears the mysterious song of a young child, leading him to pick up the scripture and finally embrace Christianity: "the music surged in my ears, truth seeped into my heart, and feelings of devotion overflowed". Although Saint Augustine recognizes the immense value music can have in revealing the divine truth of the *word*, he remains reluctant to let its sensuous qualities dominate reason in the realm of contemplation and thinks it is a "grievous sin" when he finds "the singing itself more moving than the truth which it conveys". The authority of the scripture had to be preserved as the sole arbiter of truth, and as a consequence, music in the Church for centuries held a subservient role (if it was not altogether prohibited) to that of the words themselves.

Whereas words point towards the immutable ideal, music excites the fleeting emotions, hence is irrational in its nature. Music is always *becoming*, in which form ceaselessly renews itself. For Plato and Saint

Augustine, words, not sensory experience, were the means to develop an “inner eye” for the Ideas belonging to the intelligible realm – the realm of *being*. Naturally, the revelatory potential for truth in music was looked upon with less ambivalence by thinkers who were not intimidated by its sensory properties, and for whom the path towards transcendental ideals was not exclusively to be found in pure, uncontaminated contemplation.

To the religious mind, the contemplation of and meditations on God’s attributes – His mercy, His holiness, His omniscience, His absoluteness – nurtures the vitality of belief itself, and is essential in coming to terms with life’s apparent pairs of opposites, such as self – other, life – death, finitude – infinity. According to Immanuel Kant – seeking to establish the limits of knowledge in order “to give room for faith” – we can have no cognition of anything outside of experience itself. The thing-in-itself, beyond appearances, remains forever unknowable. Since no empirical sense-content is required as a basis for the conception of religious ideas, the insights gained cannot properly be called objects of knowledge at all. Yet he reasons that contemplation of such kind has definite implications for our attitude to life as a whole, and ultimately sees the true value of religion as rooted in the needs of *practical reason*, since, based on reason alone, we cannot fully sustain our commitment to morality.

The 19th century poet and theologian John Henry Newman writes: “Religious men, according to their measure, have an idea or vision of the Blessed Trinity in Unity, of the Son Incarnate, and of His Presence, not as a number of qualities, attributes, and actions, not as the subject of a number of propositions, but as one and individual, and independent of words, like an impression conveyed through the senses...” It seems evident that the act of meditating on symbolic and transcendental truths has little to do with the acquisition of knowledge, but is rather the purest expression of a longing to give form to *knowing*: to find recognition, within perceptible form, of our inner occurrences, of our intimations of the unknown, of the enigmatic and inexplicable aspects of existence. And does this all not amount to a profoundly creative act? An act which – through the manifestation of an existence beyond the self whose presence can be felt and sensed – affirms the reciprocal relations of inner and outer worlds?

To our conscious minds, even formlessness takes a form, which is how it is recognized. But what the creation of art and the practice of religion seem to have in common at their very core is an impulse – originating from the unconscious – to bring the formless into the light, so to speak, and thereby reify an existence to the unknown which can be apprehended in sensory reality. In this light, it is senseless to discern what forms are created from *within* and what forms are received from *without*.

Is the existential awe and dread we experience as trumpets and trombones blast through the air not essential to their manifestations as form? And is the essence of *loudness* not rooted in our very beings as intensity? Are we not, then, confronted with a world which moves and acts upon us, with a world imbued with *subjectivity*, with a spirited matter?

Let us consider the experience of an elementary constituent of form: repetition – as a musical element, a tone or gesture, recurring at regular intervals. As sound, we may hear the particular instances of repetition in manifold ways – as gentle bow-strokes, as forceful blows – yet do these appearances in their simplest forms not already contain a distinct potentiality of meaning, emanating, as it were, from the very essence of regularity, from the Idea of *regularness itself*? It is as if something abstract, something entirely *other*, is carried over to our world and finds concrete realizations in inner states whose contents may be qualified in experiential terms only: as insistence, persistence, persuasiveness.

But these qualities, while seemingly originating in something which is undeviating and constant, are, as we experience them, all bound up with time and change, with expectations of a future and what it might hold. As much as the form speaks to us, it seems impossible not to find ourselves in that very form. After all, our intuitive perception of time and space – which precedes all reason and causality – has its roots in embodied existence; the sensations of the beating heart and the spatial extension of our beings are not conditioned by anything outside of us. This *a priori*, inner presence must be what brings about the foundational structure on which all forms of consciousness depend. We may ask ourselves, then, if pure repetition or the essence and Idea of *sameness* truly exists for us, other than as incomplete abstraction.

In the immediacy of music, the unconscious, intuitive sense of space and time somehow becomes imbued with a musical substance, and it seems that what is presented to us from outside – the music and its movements – is in fact not re-presented in our minds, but is pure inner presence, as if consciousness itself has taken an audible form. From within experience, it appears nonsensical to draw demarcation lines between where form ends and where its meanings begin. When our attention is directed towards what is heard, rather than being dissolved in the hearing itself, the music crystallizes into a sort of *Gegenstand*, something which we stand in opposition towards, and only then is the subject-object divide discernible. The dichotomy of form and content certainly serves its purposes and makes the analysis of musical behavior within a conceptual framework possible. But an image of music without including the listener resembles a scientific description of physical matter without the implications of an observer: although it may generate immense knowledge and have great utility, it will have no room for colors.

Arthur Schopenhauer writes that “we must learn to understand nature from ourselves, not ourselves from nature”, and that the key to an understanding of the essence of the world lies precisely in this intuition. Only ourselves do we know in two, seemingly disparate ways: both as “representation” – the awareness of ourselves as embodied beings, as objects in the world subject to the same outside forces as all other phenomena – and as inner, volitional states such as hope, joy, desire, fear, courage, envy and terror. Schopenhauer extends an existential continuity from this experiential, immediate reality to that which he calls the Will, the “inner nature of the world” – the blind, unprincipled, life force beyond time, space and causality. Yet the Will is present to us and “expresses itself intelligibly to everyone in the concrete, that is, as feeling”. Much like our consciousness, the Will eludes any objectification and is, in a sense, pure subjectivity.

For Schopenhauer, the Platonic Ideas, while still acting as the timeless paradigms of all phenomena, are the “objectifications” of the Will itself: “When clouds move, the figures they form are not essential, but indifferent to them. But that as elastic vapor they are pressed together, driven off, spread out, and torn apart by the force of the wind, this is their nature, this is the essence of the forces that are objectified in them, this is the Idea.” Perhaps, we can imagine – in a timeless reality beyond cause and effect – that the Will is to the Ideas what ripples and waves are to water, or that it is akin to the excitation in a medium such as air, which ultimately, as vibrations in matter and as objectified Idea, is expressed as sound. In other words – the Will is something like an energetic *movement* beyond matter.

It is in our attention to art and music, as Schopenhauer sees it, that we can ultimately quiet the stirrings of the Will which relate to the more individual aspects of existence. But a true aesthetic perception not only entails beholding art with a certain disinterestedness – observing it carefully and appreciating its beauty for its own sake, apart from any presuppositions about its value and utility – it in fact requires something much more radical: it demands the sort of contemplation in which the *subject* becomes fully absorbed and lost in the perception of the *object*. Only then can we somehow intuit the timeless essences of the Ideas, and glimpse the inner nature of phenomena, had they not been split into their manifold, individual appearances in the dimensions of time and space. As we immerse ourselves in the art object or the music, we are something like a mirror to the world’s essential being, and may acquire an intuitive sense of the *mover*, of the subjectivity of the world itself, and not merely perceive the phenomena, that which is *moved*.

Whereas music, in some ways, is an abstraction (in the sense that it does not relate to other phenomena in the world directly), the other arts, according to Schopenhauer, express the Ideas in more individual ways. Painting and the plastic arts such as sculpture, for instance, “express in the distinctness of reality what

music asserts in the universality of mere form". Music is able to mirror all the possible occurrences of the Will – those within us as well as beyond – but “always only according to the in-itself, not to the phenomenon, as it were the innermost soul of the phenomenon without the body.” Schopenhauer goes as far as to assert that music “gives the innermost kernel preceding all form, or the heart of things” by which he alludes to its ability to move the listener to experience a sensation such as *painfulness* quite independently from any actual cause in the world. Detached from actual suffering, music expresses that which causes the *movement* of pain itself.

How is it that the very same bodily movement, set to music or to silence, seemingly reflects two vastly different worlds? When the art forms of dance and music meet, the movements are almost unrecognizable, as if they are drawn towards something more universal, while the potentiality of meaning within the music, on the other hand, is thrown in a distinctly different direction. Somehow, quite enigmatically, music seems to intensify our intuitions of the presence of the infinite within the finite and particular. And, to paraphrase Schopenhauer, this might be the reason why music, when set to words, movement or images – or, for that matter, when set to our inner landscapes and mind-wandering – seemingly imbues all perceptual representations, as well as our inner worlds, with a greater significance.

In dance, the particularity of a gesture – although we can certainly apprehend it as abstract and, to some extent, as far from individual expression – still reveals the essence of the Ideas through a more tangible reality, closer to the lived and concrete. Yet through aesthetic contemplation, the expressiveness of the special and individual becomes representative of the whole, and we intuit how, in this very bodily movement, the essence of all the forms it could possibly take is somehow present within it. These glimpses of the infinite in what appears as particular is what Goethe names the intuitive understanding of the *Ur-phenomenon*.

We enter a Gothic cathedral: and we are struck, dumbfounded, by the sheer amplitude of forces and forms – as if they, in their dynamic interplay, find a silent, resonating body within us. We observe the columns extending towards the arched forms of the vault and the geometric patterns of the windows and the sense of how the universal is expressed within the particularity of form is perceptible. In this space, the impression is such that the more abstract, architectural elements, expressing the Ideas of *unity, balance, difference* and so forth, interact with Ideas of a very different nature – of *justice, the good and the holy* – expressed in the more earthly, ritualistic and sacramental spaces, as well as in the stained glass depicting scenes closer to the moral realities of individual life. And that, altogether, these vastly different expressions, in their myriad of interactions, remind us of an inexplicable, greater context.

Then, we may wonder: from where does this sense of reverence and significance, of something greater, emanate? Does it arise in us by virtue of a certain familiarity embedded in our memories, from the fact that we have intimate knowledge of, and therefore, particular expectations from this particular form-encounter? Yet this sheds no more light on the mystery which is felt in the direct impact with the form itself. When did familiarity ever produce such sensations of awe, of being reduced to nothing in the presence of the *other*? Rather, we sense something which moves us entirely beyond our will, a dynamic agency which, seemingly, springs forth from within and between the actual forms themselves.

At times, in the immediate experience of art and music, and in the encounter with certain architectural spaces, we are confronted with a reality in which metaphysical questions pose themselves – how does this distinctly *other* move us? – why do we have this sense of recognition of something which is essentially not known? At some level, then, there is perhaps, like Schopenhauer intuited, a shared nature and structure between the inner consciousness – that which *moves* the “I” that experiences the world – and the *mover*, that which lies underneath the forms and appearances in the experienced, outer world.

To the individual in ancient times, the experiences of the *numen* as intimations of something beyond were evident demonstrations of the essential, spirited nature of the world. And quite likely, they formed the basis and inspiration for the peculiar attitude towards the world which is denoted by the word *religio*, the careful observance and consideration of phenomena and ideas deemed worthy of special attention. Not unlike the religious experience, the encounter with art invites us to cultivate an inner receptivity for the pure *subjectivity* of the world. In the contemplation of an object or idea – and in direct immersion with the art object or “music process” – the divided self, which mirrors itself as a *Gegenstand* and which predominantly recognizes itself in its inner re-presentation, reclaims its wholeness.

In such immediacy, we sense that the boundaries between the abstract, intelligible realm and the concrete and sensory reality dissolve. But these experiences, especially when ventured into with conscious attention, requires a certain acceptance and willingness to cease – momentarily at least – to be subjects with active agency in the world, and rather become that which is acted upon, something like an object to the world as subject.

Symbolism, imagery and representation in music: Bach, Liszt, Franck, Messiaen

If the word is a sign, it means nothing. But if the word is a symbol, it means everything.

– Carl Jung, *The Red Book* (1914-30)

Shimmering, percussion; powerful breaths sounding immense trombones; thy servants are flames of fire... – and then, the songs of birds drinking azure – and the angels are amazed: for God has joined, not with them, but with the human race...

– Olivier Messiaen, author's note to *Vingt Regards sur l'enfant-Jésus – Regard des Anges* (1944)

Since the earliest of times, we have recognized that certain forms hint at something far greater than that which they seemingly represent – that the image of the perfect circle, for instance, carries within itself a suggestion of wholeness, a presence of the infinite and boundless, which does not reside in its material form and finite existence as a number of atoms and particles, yet which it, as a symbol, expresses perfectly. It is as if the external object as perceived by the senses and the inner form speak to one another in a secret, dynamic language from which meaning and significance emerge. In the symbol, the truths as we discover them are inexhaustible, and its irreducible nature contributes to its perfection. It is *becoming* encapsulated within *being*: that which it is not (as of yet) is always already present within it.

The Latin word *symbolus* denotes a sign or mark of recognition, while the even older classical Greek word *symbolon* referred to the ancient practice of breaking a piece of ceramic into two parts: one half for the person who would receive a future message and the other half for the person who intended to send it. When the parts formed a perfect whole, the recipient could then be certain that the message-bearer bringing the other part also carried a true message.

Carl Jung writes that, to our conscious minds, the symbol in its many formations appears as the “sensuously perceptible expression of an inner experience.” According to Jung, symbolic images originate within the unconscious as the most appropriate expressions of the unknown, while the actual formation of symbols in the world are “moulded by the ideas acquired by the conscious mind.” True symbols emanate a specific energy from within, a *numen* – hints and intimations of a transcendent nature – which is conceivable by virtue of structural archetypes rooted in the depths of our psyche. As *numinous* anchor points for social rituals and religious contemplation, symbols in their many manifestations combine the quality of their concrete, sensory form with a more suggestive aspect, from which abstract concepts and ideas develop in the conscious mind.

The sign – as image, word, sound – points directly towards that which it refers to, towards the object or concept, and the relation between the two, between the signifier and its actual referent in the world, while direct, is also interchangeable. The languages made up by words and signs are invented, while the symbolic language, at first “spoken” only by the unconscious, is discovered. Unless the word is understood as a symbol, there is no reason to *dwell* in the word itself, as it is merely a carrier of that which it represents. On the differences between the two, Jung writes: “A sign is always less than the thing it points to, and a symbol is always more than we can understand at first sight. Therefore, we never stop at the sign but go on to the goal it indicates; but we remain with the symbol because it promises more than it reveals.” We could add that, upon arrival at the definite meaning of the sign, we stop and do not seek further, but when we stay with the symbol, we look upwards (and inwards) and move towards the infinite.

As an inner, symbolic image, the circle has no absolute relation to any referent, yet the abstract ideas intimately associated with it have some relationship to the presence and distinctness of its form: as if there are concealed hints residing in its sensory manifestations, in the circle-image or circle-object. Similarly, the symbol of the cross has a concrete, sensory referent in the world from which symbolic ideas spring forth, nurtured by conscious ideas.

Music, like the true symbol, carries within itself – in the sensuousness of sound, in its infinite forms, gestures and textures – a distinct potential for *reference* to something other, far beyond its actual existence as sound. Music embodies meaning and suggestiveness, and that which it alludes to resists any grasp; in it, we only come across signs (and the conceptual ideas and symbolism they might refer to) indirectly, in post-immediacy, since their recognition is contingent on prior, conscious knowledge.

And while it does not refer to anything beyond itself – signs have no place in immediate reality – its forms and movement long for completion and wholeness, to be made conscious, and thereby, as if by their own will, continuously create *inner* reference in the mind of the listener. In this sense, music is a symbolic *becoming*, as it combines the sensuous qualities of its sounds with a suggestive abstractness which is able to express the unknown unlike anything else.

But let us not forget that words are not merely signs, that written language – “unspoken” words – is a fairly recent invention, and that, for centuries, even as more people became literate, it was unthinkable for them to not speak the words out loud as they read them. Through and between words, in the form of gestures, rhythm, accents and inflection, music seeps in everywhere. A change of *tone*, the prolongation of a syllable – and the representational meaning of the word is undermined, reversed, or confirmed. This “musical grammar” of the words is what negates or affirms meaning, just as the presence of musical meaning within the word is what reveals the intentions, on part of the speaker, behind the words. In this sense, the word is inherently musical.

During Bach's lifetime and later in the 18th century, word painting – the practice in which some literal or metaphorical aspect of the word is represented directly in music – is still flourishing. When words such as “disappearing”, “dying” and “exhausted” are featured in the text, their meanings will be reflected in the music by actual silence. Or, perhaps more subtly, as we encounter the word “heaven”, we hear the phrase in which it appears as high, ascending notes. At other times, the music will imitate the sounds directly associated with the word and the phenomenon it points towards. Where the biblical words speak of suffering and pain, Bach extensively “paints” them with dissonant, clashing suspensions or with the descending half-step, the so-called *pianto* motif: the rhetorical, melodic movement which – for centuries, since the early Gregorian chants – has represented sighs and weeping.

In some instances, the imitative representation of sounds directly associated with the word-referent may, for the listener, result in the abrupt realization of a certain craft and “artfulness” behind the music. We are then pulled out of the stream of immediate reality, as the conscious mind is quite pleased with itself for discerning the direct correspondence between the two phenomena. But is it not essential that we recognize the symbolic potential inherent in words, such that their *becoming* comes to life, and that we do not apprehend them as mere signifiers? When we embrace the immense meanings of the word, the discerning intellect is silenced; then, there is no dissonance between the universality of that which is signified by the word and the distinctness of the music itself, since, as Jung observes: “[in the symbol] all paradoxes are abolished”. As the inherent suggestiveness of music meets the inexhaustible significance of the words in a sort of symbiotic dance, both expressive domains, as experienced by the listener, acquire the potential for transfiguration.

And although the representation of a concept in music is contingent on knowledge which is extrinsic to it, this concept or idea may contain symbolic truths which will find novel expressions through the distinct sensory quality of the music. If an intimate identification and knowledge of certain symbolic realities – which the music alludes to – is present in the mind of the listener, will the potential recognition of these very realities in the direct encounter with the music not make the experience all the more significant? And essentially give rise to a sort of reciprocal meaning-giving, as well as form-creation, between the “subject”, the listener, and the music itself?

If we now consider Bach's re-imagining of the Latin Advent hymn *Nun komm, der Heiden Heiland* – whose origins can be traced back to no less than Saint Augustine's spiritual mentor, Saint Ambrose, Bishop of Milan – is it not so that the impressions evoked by the slow, grave steps of the bass part are fundamentally inseparable from a particular awareness of the larger, symbolic context, namely that of being bound to this earth? And are these intimations of a predestined fate not exactly that which, in contrast, gives the boundless freedom of the melismatic soprano voice its distinct character of hopefulness?

The chorale preludes for organ, which were composed with the intention to accompany church services throughout the liturgical year, also offered moments of contemplation and reflection to the congregation before the singing of psalms. Yet the music of the cantata cycles, which often provided the material and inspiration for the more improvisatory style of the chorale preludes, is saturated with symbolism and theological allegories to a degree which, to modern ears, can almost seem to corrupt the “purity” of the music.

The church congregation, for whom Bach performed and composed, certainly related to and perceived the Lutheran messages conveyed in the cantatas – often harsh words about the sinful flesh and the misery and futility of the human condition – in a different light than most people nowadays, and they might have expected nothing less than musical symbolism and rhetorical means to serve theological ends in a perceptible and striking manner. To convey the meaning and significance of the *word*, beauty must yield for truth. Bach did, after all, at some point explicitly state that his ultimate, artistic goal is to create “a well-regulated church music to the Glory of God”, and, throughout his life, he signed off his compositions – not only the service music, but instrumental works as well – with *Soli Deo Gloria*.

In the organ prelude *Komm, Gott Schöpfer, Heiliger Geist*, a rather peculiar threefold texture is present from the very outset. The melody, in its triumphant glory, is the 9th century hymn *Veni Creator Spiritus*, while underneath the middle parts, which leap about joyously, the rumbling bass part brings about an element of confusion. During the first part of the piece, the bass voice continuously falls on the displaced and unsettled third beat, giving rise to an allegorical image of the third, divine person of the Trinity, the Holy Ghost. More fundamentally, it symbolically presents something perceptible which does not quite align with rational thought and whose manifestation remains in part incomprehensible.

Allegories, as we find them in the Baroque period, can also express religious and conceptual ideas by referencing these directly in the form of musical signs, often concealed in the score. One of the most well-known examples is the B-A-C-H motif, which appears within the texture at the very end of *Komm, Gott Schöpfer*. This motif is a musical cryptogram, a sequence of notes spelling out a word, but it contains another symbol as well: as we draw imaginary lines between the two outer and between the two inner notes, the outline of the cross appears on the paper.

Almost a century after Bach, Goethe differentiates between allegory as an image referring to a concept (which is always definable and limited) and symbolism as an image alluding to some relationship with an idea (which is forever unattainable and boundless). That which an allegory refers to resides *outside*, and the path leading us from the music (or, more often: the score) to the concept is undeviating and firm. On the other hand, the symbolic idea is expressed *within* the music. In the direct encounter, confronted with the boundless nature of sound and music,

concepts are invalidated. Without strictly separating between allegories and symbolism in music, we can imagine a continuum where, on one end, we find signs pointing towards concepts, and on the other end, we encounter musical moments which somehow evoke hints of a symbolic nature.

For Schopenhauer, art must strive for naturalness of expression, and he consequently argues that, in music, all direct representations of worldly phenomena are to be rejected. The “object” of music is not representation, but – since it mirrors it and is capable of expressing it – the Will itself. Imitation should therefore not be an aim in itself and music must aspire to express the stirrings of the Will, rather than inadequately re-present its “objectifications” in the world. Different artistic expressions by means of words, images and sounds reveal unique aspects of the same inner nature of the world, but, according to Schopenhauer, it is only through immediate, instinctive perception, unknown to reason, that we may come to discover the analogies between their particular expressivities.

In the 19th century, symbolism in the arts (in its more purposefully developed philosophy) arises as the existential application of religious rituals in society declines. Perhaps it is this gradual loss of symbolic life which gives rise to the greater need for creating appropriate expressions of the immaterial through other means and forms. Franz Liszt – who, throughout his life exhibited personal tendencies towards the boundless, in virtuosity, in religion – longed for a music whose expressiveness would not be limited to its own sphere, but which could express anything in the world, including theological truths. Many of Liszt’s contemporaries and followers would go so far as to claim that, finally, the extra-musical “content” of the music took precedence over form, in the sense that the initial conception of the music and its subsequent formation were directly determined by the imperatives of specific beliefs and ideas. In some ways, envisioning a future of what music could be also meant looking backwards to a time when there was no such absolute dichotomy between what music could express “in itself” and the contents of ideas external to it.

At some point later in life, Liszt confessed to a priest that he believed “[music to be] at once the divine and satanic art that more than all other arts leads us into temptation.” Owing to his religiosity, he had a natural inclination towards, if not obsession with, symbols and their representation in music. And, like Bach and others before him, he incorporated in his music symbolism intelligible to the mind, but not to the ears, such as the B-A-C-H motif. Liszt appropriated the first few notes – an ascending whole- step, followed by an ascending minor third – from the Gregorian hymn *Crux Fidelis*, to create a more personal musical symbol and cross-motif. In this particular hymn, we come across the word *cross* at the very outset, and the symbolism is rather embedded within the music. Gregorian hymns are naturally dictated by the rhythms and inflections of the words themselves, and their melodies are shaped in accordance with the text and its theological meaning. As a symbol of Christ and redemption, the melodic fragment from *Crux Fidelis* appears extensively in Liszt’s sacred works, not to mention in the Sonata in B minor, where it, in opposition to the diabolical elements, completes a striking duality.

On the whole, the narratives in the *Two Legends* are characterized by imagery rather than symbolism, as the sounds of waves and birdsong permeate the musical textures. It was likely Liszt's radical willingness to bring aspects of other art forms into music, which led him to search beyond the historical paradigm that viewed pitch and rhythm as the primary musical elements which governed and determined form. Liszt's visions made him fully embrace the charms of tone-colors and harmony-duration, and as a result, as if incidentally, compose music in 1863 which, to us, already sounds impressionistic. There are no traces of dialectics, of opposing elements, and the harmonies and musical development appear almost changeless and timeless. After all – this music depicts miracles performed by Saints, beings close to perfection. In *Walking on the Waves*, even as the sea around him builds momentum and the storm rages, the dignified quality of the theme representing Saint Francis of Paula — who sails on nothing but his cloak and strides with firm steps across the strait of Messina towards Sicily — is present throughout.

In the *Sermon to the Birds*, as St. Francis of Assisi preaches to his “brothers and sisters” — and gives them an abundance of reasons as to why they must be grateful to God, their Creator — the little birds remain absolutely motionless. Then, as the birds receive his blessings, we hear the melodic outline of the *Crux Fidelis* theme, accompanied by solemn chords. In the Italian text, which Liszt took as his inspiration, this scene is described as follows: “When Saint Francis had spoken these words to them, all of the birds began to open their beaks, to turn their necks, to spread their wings, and to bow their heads reverently toward the ground, demonstrating with their gestures and song that the holy father had given them the greatest of joy; (...) Saint Francis made the sign of the Cross above them and gave them leave to depart; and at once all the birds flew into the sky with wondrous songs (...)”

Oliver Messiaen, who, like César Franck in the century before him, was a working church musician and organ player, had a particular affinity for birdsong. For Messiaen, birds were the closest manifestation of the divine in nature, and their song symbolic of prophecy, wisdom and supreme joy. He had synesthesia, a condition where the senses blend into each other, which meant that upon hearing music, he saw — or rather, felt — corresponding colors. Thus, imagery and colors were for him not only musical metaphors, but intertwined in the very fabric of music itself.

Above all, Messiaen aspired, in accordance with his Catholic faith, to convey the higher, theological truths — namely, the truths which cannot be gained empirically through the senses, but which must be sought for in the intelligible realm. In many ways, he exemplified in his art what was expressed by the medieval axiom, *ars est celare artem*: it is (true) art to conceal art. Like the composers of the “isorhythmic” motets during the *ars nova* era, he conceived compositionally techniques which were meant to reflect a higher order. We can grasp these structures and concepts intellectually, but (for the most part) they elude the ears and sensory perception in performance.

In *Regard du Fils sur le Fils (Gaze of the Son upon the Son)*, two layers consisting of an identical pattern of rhythms and

proportions unfold in two different tempi simultaneously, as if representing coexisting *times* from an omnipresent perspective. Together, they form a “rhythmical canon”, symbolizing in their fixed, cyclical repetitions an eternal and immutable reality. Alongside these textures we hear imitations of birdsong, and within or underneath it all, distinctly present throughout (in the left hand), the chords which Messiaen referred to as the “theme of God”. Altogether, these interacting elements create an elaborate allegory of the cosmos and of creation. Yet, first of all, it seems that the vibrancy and colorfulness of this music arise from the way in which abstract, theological concepts are contemplated, or *regarded*, through the very sensuousness of sound – which, in Messiaen’s music, can take the form of both intimacy and violence.

In the oeuvre of César Franck, in which the influence from Bach’s fugal writing and the modulatory harmony of Liszt and Wagner is unmistakable, we encounter a symbolism of the more suggestive sort. There are few instances in Franck’s music of imitation of worldly phenomena, and symbolic ideas are seldom represented by concealed signs. Rather, this music (to quote George Sand, speaking on behalf of Chopin) “paints not the thing but the emotion to which it gives rise.” The point of meaning- departure is the distinct emotion and atmosphere which is presented and painted in sound. To echo some Schopenhauerian notions, the music – rather than pointing towards concepts and *re-presenting* phenomena through imitation – *presents*, in the immediate language of the unconscious, an underlying *sub-stance* which seemingly unrelated and distinct phenomena share.

If Liszt’s *Two Legends* are depictions of events and miracles as they were imagined to unfold “externally” – and painted in tone colors, so to speak – Franck’s *Prelude, Chorale and Fugue* is one grand allegory for an existential, inner journey, narrated in almost mythological proportions. Overall, the musical form is determined not so much by how themes and sections relate to one another and contrast with each other, but rather through the processes of transformation (at times subtle, at times radical) that the musical material undergoes. Like in the *Symphonic Poems* of Liszt, subjectivity is very much embedded and present in the form itself, and the musical development finds its motive in the spirit of the extra-musical vision.

Undeniably, this is music recounted from the first-person perspective, but one in which there is no description or depiction of events; rather, it is as if we are immersed inside the mind of a “subject”, our hero-protagonist. The spiritual motif of the piece, and what impels the music forward, is the path towards revelation, as revealed to us through the transfiguration of the musical material, which *presents* the different states of mind of our protagonist. Psychologically speaking, these musical processes represent the struggle of the *self* as it comes to terms with forces greater than itself. About the dynamics between the different elements of the psyche, Jung writes that “the unconscious wants to flow into consciousness in order to reach the light, but at the same time it continually thwarts itself, because it would rather remain unconscious.”

Overcome by the numinous experience and the sense that something greater acts upon us, we cannot tell whether that *other* originates from something *outside* of us, which we might call God, or from our unconscious *within*. The metaphysical beyond is also present within us as the great unknown, and for Jung, these are both “border-line concepts for transcendental contents”. The existential question consuming mankind over millennia, namely that of the quest for union with the divine – with the wholly other – is, as Jung sees it, ultimately a question with great psychological implications. In order to achieve a sense of wholeness of the inherent opposites within the psyche, Jung believes we must integrate the autonomous, irrational elements of the unconscious into appropriate symbolic ideas and expressions, also known to our conscious sense of self, to our ego-consciousness.

Coming back to the *Prelude, Chorale and Fugue*, we might envision the transfiguration of the inner life of our hero-protagonist in a Jungian light. At the very outset, in the *Prelude*, we encounter two distinct, opposing musical elements, unfolding in an alternating, binary form. The initial theme with its dim textures is the unspoken music of the unconscious, the oppressed part of the self, the shadow of the *other*. It is soon silenced by a voice that speaks outwardly: a lament, and then, exclamations – broken, descending step-wise gestures and dispirited reiterations of the *pianto* motif. This is the center of the self, the ego-consciousness, and the first intimations of the change to come.

An attempt is made at a continuous line of thought as we recede back into the obscure stirrings of the will-less realm. Again – lamentations, proclamations, now prolonged by ruminations in the form of self-dialogue, until, for the third time, we find ourselves back in the night life of the unconscious. Yet there is a hint of light and illumination as major replaces minor, and whole-steps relieve disquieting half-steps. And as the speaking voice of our protagonist reappears for the third time, the descending lament-motif is integrated into an unbroken line and the past unrest and despair replaced by an inward intonation of prayer.

The *Chorale* continues in an alternating, binary form throughout, but now, the opposing elements within the totality of the self encounter each other in the duality of prayer – answer. Something as yet unknown has taken a perceptible form within ego-consciousness, and we hear the answer at first as if from within, in *pianissimo*, yet distinctly as something *other*. Symbolically, the answer is represented by a theme whose first notes C–G–Ab–Eb visually outline the cross. Subjectively, we hear it as a state of mind, not as a manner of thinking. The call and response form alternates three times and both the spoken and unspoken words resonate with ever more conviction until, at last, we hear the answer in *fortissimo*, yet still from within.

A sudden presentiment: “what does the coming towards *that* – that which speaks through me – entail, and

what is to become of *me*? Confronted with these imperatives from within, the ego-consciousness struggles to regain itself. The descending lament motif now takes the unmistakable form and movement in half-steps associated throughout centuries with sorrow and foreboding, and known as *passus duriusculus*, the “harsh passage”. And as if from underneath, the rhythmical textures gradually hasten, foreshadowing the later progression of the fugue. Upon its third iteration, the lament has found an appropriate path within the demands and restraints of the *Fugue*.

The perfection of God’s will, Jung writes in a letter, is only so – perfect and whole – when it includes the willing participation of the subject, whose initial response, confronted with the overwhelming unknown, may be hope as well as a certain defiance. And indeed, in Jung’s words, we can imagine our protagonist saying: “I will not perish under the will of God unless I myself will it too”. While the form and development of the fugue in the baroque model unfolds organically, as if by itself, this particular fugue is ripe with momentum and aspiration towards a future. It is not clear what moves our protagonist, only that, following the encounter with something beyond, a movement towards the unknown is inevitable. The rhythmical flow of the *Fugue*, which, at first, unfolds steadily and in a restrained manner, increasingly becomes saturated with tumultuous textures. At last, the self-imposed strictures must yield, and the incessant movement culminates in a brief silence – after which we hear the lamenting exclamations of the *pianto* motif, yet again. These iterations, more insistent than ever – before subsiding – are now directed not at the self, but towards something else, immersed as they are in the dense, obscure textures of the unknown.

Gradually, almost imperceptibly, we sense a slight shimmering and the “theme of the cross” appears as a soft, translucent light: as if we are beholding the bright luminosity and perfection of the God-image through the veiled fabric of sensory reality. Then – as the immensity expands, we finally hear, in counterpoint and in *fortissimo*, the full lament theme in its fugal form. With the interpolation of the voice of our protagonist within it all, we can envision that an absolute integration of individual and perceptible reality and the wholly *other* has taken place, and that the abstract, transcendent nature of the beyond no longer remains unrecognizable.

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BACH (1685-1750)/BUSONI (1866-1924)		
Chorale Preludes, BV B 27		
1	Ich ruf' zu dir, Herr Jesu Christ, BWV 639	3:45
FRANZ LISZT (1811-1886)		
Deux légendes, S. 175		
2	I. St. François d'Assise: la prédication aux oiseaux	10:42
BACH/BUSONI		
Chorale Preludes, BV B 27		
3	Nun komm' der Heiden Heiland, BWV 659	5:06
OLIVIER MESSIAEN (1908-1992)		
From Vingt Regards sur l'Enfant Jésus		
4	V. Regard du Fils sur le Fils	8:38
BACH/BUSONI		
Chorale Preludes, BV B 27		
5	Wachet auf, ruft uns die Stimme, BWV 645	3:03
FRANZ LISZT		
Deux légendes, S. 175		
6	II. St. François de Paule marchant sur les flots	7:53
BACH/BUSONI		
Chorale Preludes		
7	Komm, Gott Schöpfer, Heiliger Geist, BWV 667	2:04
OLIVIER MESSIAEN		
From Vingt Regards sur l'Enfant Jésus		
8	XIV. Regard des Anges	5:25
CÉSAR FRANCK (1822-1890)		
Prelude, choral et fugue, FWV 21		
9	Prelude. Moderato	5:03
10	Choral. Poco più lento - Poco allegro	6:47
11	Fugue. Tempo I°	7:45

JOACHIM CARR *piano*

claves

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