



**ANALYSE ET CRÉATION
MUSICALES**

Collection Musique et Musicologie

L'Harmattan

Je crois cependant qu'il peut illustrer ce que la *théorie* musicale est en état *aujourd'hui* d'apporter à *l'invention* : aider à configurer notre entre-temps en une nouvelle modernité.

Leigh LANDY

Analysis without Ink

Preamble : This paper is not quite the one presented at the conference in 1995. At the session on «Théories et invention aujourd'hui» the writer selected from a number of notes prepared before the conference and combined these with remarks concerning issues that had arisen in other talks. Now one and a half years later, a similar approach based on the same notes has been chosen to propose and investigate a number of ideas pertinent to the topic of finding a better balance, both in analysis as in composition, between pre-existent scores and composition methods on the one hand and the ear on the other.

The context is that of a composer/musicologist who is not specialised in analysis.

Another context involves an anecdote once told me by the famous musicologist, Charles Seeger who, in his early days, used to compose. At one point in his career, in the 1920s, he was acquainted with two major composers simultaneously, Arnold Schönberg and Charles Ives. According to his tale, he found Schönberg's music «interesting», whereas he «liked» Ives' compositions. Perhaps this division is similar to Boulez's notions of understanding and enjoying music. In any event, Seeger said that he then decided that until he discovered how to make a work that was both interesting and enjoyable at the same time, he would stop composing. He had not composed in the fifty odd years that had passed between that thought and our meeting.

– Are we who analyse only interested in the brain of a work and not in its heart? If analysis might find means by which both architectural and emotional aspects of music can be quantified or at least articulated, might it not serve the contemporary composer interested in music's doing more than representing a system? If this were the case, could analysis not come to the aid of contemporary music helping it to move out of its marginalised position in today's culture?

– Whether you call it thesis/antithesis/synthesis or perhaps convergence, there are a number of developments which point towards separate approaches of the past being united. It is believed that those involved in critical musicology, in reception theory and elsewhere calling for the ear to preside above the pen in analysis represent the antithesis phase of a development due to converge and seek a dynamic balance. This paper will modestly suggest a form of synthesis.

– Similarly it is interesting to note that, for example, in the area of ethnomusicology there are signs of synthesis taking place between the musicologists studying music of the world's peoples and the anthropologists and sociologists doing the same. If ethnomusicology is the study of music as a cultural phenomenon, both music and culture are under investigation; they are not mutually exclusive subjects.

– As a consequence, more and more studies are looking into music from the point of view both of the musician(s) and of those receiving (emic: the musicians, the local audience and perhaps the researcher, etic: the ethnomusicologist or perhaps a group of listeners from another culture). By the way, the *point du départ* is the sound, not the score in most world musics. This is also true of most electroacoustic music.

– In «Music and Discourse», Nattiez introduced his famous tripartition involving poietic analysis, analysis at the neutral level

and esthetic analysis. Ultimately analysis might correlate all three. This type of holism, as ambitious as it may sound, might address what I call «Seeger's conundrum». This represents the convergence this paper is supporting.

– An example of «thesis», analysis from a musical text: Many readers may know of the extremely detailed analyses of Alban Berg's «Lyric Suite». Those in the know will recall that such analyses read, to an extent, like a soap opera with hidden Leitmotifs based on the characters of Berg's lover and her son. This makes for great reading, but can we hear any of this? If not, what are we to do with this exciting information?

The writer, when analysing a dodecaphonic movement of the «Lyric Suite» discovered a means of distributing the notes amongst the string quartet that highly resembled the method used by specialists in linear algebra interested in solving the values of a square matrix. (Berg's distribution differed only in that 12 was divided 4 x 3 which therefore represented a non-soluble matrix.) Again, with this information in mind, could anyone hear what was discovered? The writer couldn't. If not, how revolutionary or relevant was the discovery made?

– Similarly there is a difficulty to be found in Lehdahl and Jackendorff's (and think-alikes') search for musical grammars in existent music literature. If these grammars were not consciously seen as such by the musicians, themselves, nor heard by their listeners, what, exactly are we to do with them?

Iannis Xenakis creates his own grammars, as do so many today. This seems much more relevant. However, how important might these be in cases when they cannot be received as such?

– What might be more relevant here, if one is to keep the point of view of the composer(s) within an analytical framework is to see whether those elements used to generate the music can be heard as

such. If this is to be the case, and one might well disagree with this proposal, the composer should be involved in some sort of triangulation to determine whether his/her architectures, intentions and messages indeed are received. Whenever this proves to be true, especially given the diversity of musical languages currently, the listener consequently has been offered a helping hand. This has been called the «Something to Hold on to Factor» in contemporary music by the author. That «something» can be one or more of a multitude of things, as long as they are able to be perceived as a given in (a part of) a composition.

- In contrast, what do we do with the school of «new complexity» in today's composition, exemplified by the works of Brian Ferneyhough? Deciphering the scores, one arrives (possibly) at understanding complex architectures of (virtually) unplayable pieces. However, the listener's experience, that is another matter. If this is so, what's the use of this comprehension? of the listener's experience?

- Interpretation/Improvisation : This is a different matter entirely. Here the key question in analysis probably concerns what isn't represented in the notation, not what is. Obviously virtually anything can fit into Nattiez's scheme, but why are there so few useful sources of analysis concerning interpretation and most types of improvisation for that matter?

- An example of antithesis : As in many non-prescriptive musics, most electroacoustic music or other forms of sonic art works based on organising sounds are not made in score form. Some postscriptive scores, and approaches to making such scores vary greatly, are made for analysis or for sound diffusion in concerts. Many questions arise. From the composer's point of view, the number of opportunities that have come into being is incalculable given a) the sound becoming music's unit as opposed to the note, and b) the opportunities made available through new performance techniques and, more importantly, new technology. These

opportunities offer enormous choice which in turn has contributed to the multiplicity of today's musical languages. Yet how many can a person understand? Probably more than one would think. Still, the challenge is clearly reflected by the relatively small public for most electroacoustic music after 48 years. What then does one analyse and how?

Sonic works represent an emancipation in terms of what a composition can contain and how it can be put together. This emancipation is in need of a partnership with analysis. An «emancipated» analysis would embrace all three of Nattiez's levels. If not, the «thesis» old way of analysis could be proven irrelevant for this music knows no score and the «antithesis» approach, based solely upon the ear, would reign. But haven't we learned a great deal from composers' architectures and intentions? Therefore, holism might be proven to be useful.

- An important yet vexing aside : One wonders whether Pierre Schaeffer knew how dangerous the area was he was delineating when he wrote about his «quatre écoutes». The fact of the matter is that one's way of listening tends to flip-flop in any given context. There's even one way of listening Schaeffer didn't quite describe, namely that of the listener to electroacoustic music who is constantly involved with the recipe of how sounds have been generated and manipulated. In so doing, one can entirely miss the work being performed.

If one's listening does move around various levels of concentration, what is the use of a traditional analysis? of a reception-only analysis when one's way of listening is ever changing? There is some food for thought here that is somewhat daunting.

- A basic definition for music analysis is now pertinent. Is this something that concerns the musical experience or is it simply one concerning musical texts? If it is the latter, one has a problem with

the notion of analysis concerning most ethnomusicological data or anywhere else where one does not have access to a «complete» prescriptive score or, alternatively, one believes that a postscriptive score can be seen to represent a similar type of data as a prescriptive one. If both types might fit into the area of music analysis, one might perhaps seek a wider framework for a definition: *analysis is the research into patterns and characteristics of music whether written or perceived*. Might this come closer to our holistic goal?

– If this definition can be accepted, it is clear that what is needed are means – existent and to be developed – of analysis from the point of view of the listener to coincide with articulations from a composer and/or performers, possibly to be confirmed by written scores. It is assumed that this sort of approach may be quite useful in the development of semiology, cognition and associated fields as triangulation is part of the analytical process.

– Dramaturgy : Maybe one should not be so ambitious concerning how many aspects might be part of an analysis. If one were to suggest that the possibility of finding the correct words to describe what one discovers in a work of music by any means is sufficient, perhaps analysis could be any of the approaches mentioned above and any combination thereof as well.

However, there is one aspect that has not yet been described which is particularly pertinent if one is to accept the composer's point of view, namely a music's «dramaturgy». This concerns the «why» of a work which coexists alongside the typical questions concerning «what» it is made from and «how» it was constructed. Thus it concerns a tool to help the listener «enter» into a work, similar to theatre's dramaturgy, potentially aiding the listening experience (the word «guiding» is carefully avoided here). If this articulation of the «why» of the work could be combined with analysis as it has been discussed above, it might assist not only our understanding,

but also our enjoyment of music, especially within the often esoteric world of organised sound.

What exactly is this dramaturgy? It is, among other things, the «something to hold on to factor» of a work. It concerns the intention of the composer or the (audible) subject of a composition or perhaps links with our sonorous environment or even an abstract vision of the flow of a passage of sound. In short, dramaturgy is the focus on the «why», but may also articulate or seek the support of the «what» and the «how». Theoretically the call for a dramaturgy of music could be used to help the lot of marginalised contemporary music as it links the composer's view – as opposed to the composer's systems – to the listeners' experience.

– Résumé : It is believed that the analysis of the listener's experience is potentially the sum of the listener's experience of perceived characteristics of a work and the listener's interpretation of the composer's dramaturgy possibly compared to the composer's intention. Obviously it will take years to provide these analysis and dramaturgy tools. The goal of this paper is to offer not only the choice between the score and the ear, but perhaps to have one verify the other or alternatively discover conflicts between the two. Results of such analyses will not only be of use to musicologists, they would be of use to composers and performers, to journalists and to the listening public as well, offering a key to the door of some works that seem fairly locked to the world at large.

– What might the role of technology be in all of this? To state the obvious: technology is a tool, not a goal despite the actions of many. Technology allows us to create new sounds, new forms; it allows us to analyse the same. Macro and micro seem completely tangible. However, here too, that which is sought should somehow see its reflection in the listener's experience. Sophistication or «new» is not the name of the game; instead, accessibility and common understandings are much more relevant.

– An audio-visual aside : What has not been discussed so far is the fact that the eyes also have a good deal to say about today's music experience. The Image Culture is here to stay as far as the majority of music is concerned. The vast success of MTV and equivalents offers sufficient proof. Oddly enough, as is cleverly pointed out by Simon Emmerson, technology has offered us the «opportunity» to create audio-visual experiences where what the eye sees is seemingly not what one hears.

Two examples: a performer uses two «batons» to conduct what looks like a pizza box. What is seen is a small-scale choreography of the musician conducting a receiver. Alas, when a large gesture takes place, one does not necessarily immediately hear a large musical gesture. Some moves are sending commands that have no sound equivalent. Displaced image and sound are very odd, indeed. More tangible is the second example, the often occurring case of a keyboard (or guitar or any other MIDI triggerable instrument) playing a sound which does not «belong» to that instrument. For example, a note on a keyboard is pressed on stage and what one hears is a dog barking. This is indeed a form of «progress» for the good old pianoforte, but nevertheless surrealistic at best. A sound-only analysis of such music would seem incomplete.

– A second audio-visual aside : There is yet another exciting convergence taking place these days. The performing arts seem to be merging in a number of cases. (It was assumed in Greek theatre that there was dance and music – they were all one and the same.) Sound and video works are increasing as well. Whether one goes audio-visual to increase one's public or because it is the right thing to do is not in question here. The fact that there is an increasing amount of music in which the image plays a role means that analysis may need to develop new tools taken from the sister arts to heighten the understanding of tomorrow's «Gesamtkunstwerk».

– Conclusion and synthesis : In starting to prepare the talk for Montpellier in late 1994, it was thought that a propaganda story for

the listener's point of view in all analyses would be the best thing to do. On the way it became clear that either/or stories are ones of thesis/antithesis. Emancipation only occurs with synthesis. Thus the title should read: «Analysis with or without Ink». Stated differently – synthesis today not only means how to generate sounds, it also represents the dialectic proposed in the above paragraphs. Perhaps the field of music analysis will seem too vast with all these opportunities in mind. It is the belief of the author that traditional analysis has been a reflection of the ivory tower of academe; the proposed ways of analysis might prove themselves to be highly relevant to specialist and enthusiast alike and consequently might transport its results into the real world.

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