HEGEL, SCHOPENHAUER, HANS lick, AND LANGER
ON THE MEANING OF MUSIC

A Thesis

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by
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INTRODUCTION

Music fascinates us. The people who are fortunate enough to love it cannot help feeling in unison with the ancient view that music tells us something infinitely important about ourselves and the world around us. It must have some kind of deep meaning. Yet it is precisely the meaning of music that has been the most problematic and challenging area in the musical aesthetics of the past two centuries. We are convinced that music is saying something, the question is: what is it?

The search for the meaning of music is by no means anything new. From the times of the Pythagoreans who saw in music the universal element of number, an expression of the all-pervading mathematical harmony governing the entire cosmos, to the twentieth century, that saw the rise of the semiotics of music, this search has continued attracting innumerable writers and philosophers, and still attracts them today. This thesis is the result of the author's deep conviction that the history of an issue in philosophy can provide profound insights and constitutes an important background to its discussion at any given point in time. And today one feels sometimes that the musical-aesthetic discourse is influenced by the entire history of philosophizing about music at once. Yet the 19th and 20th centuries have yielded perhaps the
largest body of literature on music ever and, when this literature is viewed broadly, the 20th century seems to be a summing-up.

It is impossible, of course, to follow all the various permutations that the problem of musical meaning has undergone over the past two centuries. Since there is an enormous amount of material on the subject the purpose of this thesis must be defined as accurately as possible to make it sufficiently concrete. Simple "snapshots" of the problem are of little help to a philosopher, and so are abstract and excessively broad panoramas where important detail is lost. Detail and perspective must therefore be combined.

Considering this, four philosophers have been selected whose views, either musical-aesthetical or philosophical in general, have, on the one hand, exercised significant influence on the way the philosophical discourse on art in general and music in particular has developed and therefore deserve close attention; on the other hand, they represent sufficiently contrasting positions and span a sufficiently long period of time to give our study a sense of perspective as to how musical meaning has been viewed from widely differing approaches in widely differing historical settings. The writings chosen for our analysis are: Georg Wilhelm Friedrich Hegel's *Lectures on Fine Arts* and especially his lectures on music; Arthur Schopenhauer's *The World as Will and Idea*; Eduard Hanslick's *The Beautiful in Music*, and finally
Suzanne Langer’s Philosophy in a New Key and Feeling and Form.

In the course of our study we shall trace the development of the theme in the above writings in chronological order, comparing the authors’ views with the purpose of analysing their differences and similarities. The only deviation from it consists in analysing Hegel’s musical aesthetics before Schopenhauer’s and it needs to be clarified. Strictly speaking, Schopenhauer had indeed published The World as Will and Idea (1816), containing his philosophy of music, almost two decades before Hegel’s lectures on art appeared in print (1835) and even before Hegel began lecturing on philosophy of art in Berlin (1820). Yet the recognition by the public and philosophical acclaim came to Schopenhauer only in the 1850s whereas before that he had been overshadowed by Hegel’s dominating presence. Our decision to begin with Hegel is therefore based not on formal chronological considerations but on the theory’s period of prominence in history. Hegel’s prime influence, especially as far as philosophy of art is concerned, definitely comes earlier than Schopenhauer’s. The history of music provides further grounds for this choice. It is an oft-mentioned fact that Romantic music historically evolved much later than Romanticism in the other arts, and it was Schopenhauer who created an “ultraromantic” philosophy of music which influenced the European music of the mid- and late 19th century like perhaps no other aesthetic did.

The overall purpose of the thesis will be to demonstrate
the **continuity** in the four authors' understanding of music. This focus was suggested by the material itself: as we were proceeding from one philosopher to the other it became obvious that there was substantial agreement among them on what the core of musical meaning is. This agreement, however, is inseparable from large disparities among the authors, and, in fact, the larger the latter the more striking the former. Consequently, we shall make no attempt to gloss over the authors' differences.

In the course of our discussion we shall thus argue that Hegel's interpretation of the category of 'subjectivity' which constitutes, according to his theory, the basis for the content of music is akin to Schopenhauer's category of 'will'; further, that Hanslick's understanding of musical meaning repeats in many aspects that of the two previous philosophers despite his insistence on the formal side of music as the bearer of meaning; and finally, that Langer's treatment of musical meaning is, essentially, the revival of the old idealist theories, an attempt to reconcile those theories with the spirit of the 20th century, and as such has many affinities with both Hegel's and Schopenhauer's (and, by extension, Hanslick's) views.

In handling the views of the above philosophers, we shall not operate with any particular definition of **meaning** in mind. Our purpose, in each case, would rather be to grasp what the author in question understood by this term. In the case of
Hegel and Schopenhauer, obviously, the older version of the term, 'content,' is used interchangeably with 'meaning.' The further restriction of our study is that, in the overall domain of meaning, we are looking only at one small part, namely, musical meaning. We sincerely hope that we will not be required to resolve here the larger problems related to the issue of meaning in general.

Agreeing with Nelson Goodman, however, in that a "positionless" position, i. e., an entirely innocent view is a chimera, we must point out that we find Hegel's solutions to some of the larger philosophical problems, e. g. the subject-object and content-form relations, much more satisfactory than any other we know of. While a partial comparison of these solutions with those suggested by the other authors, as far as they pertain to music, is within the scope of this study, we cannot seriously presume we can explain these views here in their entirety.

This thesis, nonetheless, has not been written to vindicate anyone's theory: we are attempting to compare our four authors in one particular dimension: their theories of musical meaning. Instead of looking at them through the prism of "prefabricated" definitions, we use their "dialogue" among themselves as a foil for each of the four doctrines. The course of this dialogue and the way in which certain themes have been developed are more in the focus than its final results, if there are any. The discussion is far from being
closed today, and we do not suppose that anyone can close it by writing a thesis.
Chapter I
The Art of Pure Subjectivity

In Hegel's system the entire world is the result of the activity of the spirit or, as Hegel put it, "Spirit is alone Reality."\(^1\) This crucial precept of Hegel's philosophy is only too easily misunderstood or misinterpreted by his critics and too frequently played down even by well-meaning interpreters. Yet it is the very foundation of his system as a whole, as well as of his philosophy of art. Everything--atoms, celestial bodies, appearances and deepest meanings--is the result of the unrelenting self-unfolding of spirit-mind. This mind has its universal and objective aspect that assumes the shape of all objects and events confronting its opposite--mind's individual, subjective side--as in our thoughts, feelings, and aspirations. These two aspects of spirit have a common nature, are two modifications of one and the same "thing," and together constitute a whole that is richer and higher than either of them--Absolute Reason. This height of spiritual evolution is not something given and obtaining from the very beginning: the story of the spirit's life gradually progresses

from the simple to more complex, from the indeterminate state to saturation with finest distinctions, from the external to increasingly internal, from the purely sensuous to the purely spiritual in which, however, the sensuous is not abandoned and forgotten but sublated and preserved in the form that corresponds to its true origins--its ideal significance. The crown of this activity is thus the Concept, the finest and the truest fruit of the spirit.

Depending on the complexity of the spirit's activity and the level of its development, various aspects of reality are placed in a historical-spiritual hierarchy. Art belongs to the highest sphere of the spirit's evolution, i. e. that of the Absolute. It is included in this sphere along with two other realms of spirituality--religion and philosophy, the latter of which is, in turn, the final stage and the highest achievement of spirit.

What is spirit then?

It is the inner being of the world, that which essentially is, and is per se; it assumes objective, determinate form, and enters into relations with itself--it is externality (otherness), and exists for itself; yet, in this determination, and in its otherness, it is still one with itself and for itself at once.2

To decipher this quotation we would need to write a book of the scope of the one it is taken from. It is very important, however, to emphasize, and remember throughout our analysis, again, that, for Hegel, the inner core of reality,

2Ibid.
the spirit, and its outer phenomenal manifestations are essentially one and the same, consist of the same "stuff," and are inextricably linked through an unceasing interplay with each other. And therefore whenever we deal with some object of the outer world or some mental event of the inner world we are always dealing with meanings, various degrees of meaningfulness as such. In this study we shall distinguish of course between the external, objective and the internal, subjective aspects of this meaningfulness, and our purpose will be to analyse the inner meaning of music, i. e., in contradistinction to its formal aspects. Yet, in Hegel’s case, it is especially critical to emphasise that, within the framework of his system, there is no impassable abyss between meaning and form but, on the contrary, they are a unity that yields a result qualitatively superior to either of them.

In the course of its development, the spirit undergoes numerous transformations and assumes many different forms. Art captures some of the more important of them, that is to say, it is that sphere of reality where the spirit shows its own true nature through embodiment in sensuous forms. At this stage of its evolution, the spirit already has a very complex and "multilayered" structure, and to understand what the content of art is for Hegel we need to see what aspects, what modifications of the spirit are involved in this process of its self-realisations.

The first thing that any account of Hegel’s aesthetics
would point to is that art is the implementation of the Ideal in the sensuous medium. The totality of the Ideal is expressed in the whole system of the arts, the individual arts being the expression of various aspects of, or—which is the same—specific stages in, the evolution of spirit. At certain phases of this evolution certain arts step forth as the predominant and optimal expressions of the life of the Absolute. The aspects and stages of this life are essentially the same thing because, like the seed of a plant, the spirit in the beginning of its development contains its future shape only in an undeveloped ("unmediated" or "immediate" in Hegel's language) form. As it develops, spirit gradually displays all the potential forms contained in its "seed," and each next form can only appear in a certain order, in its own time. We can see this process both in Hegel's Phenomenology of Mind and in his Lectures on Fine Art, both in his overall picture of the world and in his aesthetics.

In other words, the story of spirit's journey from one art to the other is important not only as an exposition of the history of art but also as an explication of art's meaning. It may be tempting, as it has been many times in the history of musical aesthetics, to avoid the general context of Hegel's philosophy of art and deal with, e.g., his interpretation of the meaning of music without going into the trouble of
understanding it. It is not surprising then that as a result this interpretation would be dismissed as something obviously wrong. A serious approach, however, requires that we understand Hegel’s views on music in the context of his views on the other arts, and hence we need to know at least the general outline of the spiritual evolution of art.

This evolution occurs in three main stages: symbolic, classical, and romantic. The nature of the stages is determined by the spirit’s character at a given point in its development, i.e., spirit determines the forms of its own artistic implementations in the sensuous media. At the symbolic stage, the spirit, or the Idea, finds its most adequate expression in the art of architecture. The spirit, the Absolute, or the divine sphere at this stage is still vague and undeveloped within itself, its own nature is yet unclear to it, and therefore it is perceived as something external, something "greater" than its realizations in material shapes. Quite in keeping with this external character of the spirit, architecture organises the spatially extended material according to the laws of gravity, but the temple erected by symbolic art is not yet inhabited by the spirit. Symbolic art seeks the spirit but cannot express it in its true nature, i.e., as the "inner" and subjective.

Symbolic art is succeeded by classical that does find an

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3Eduard Hanslick, whose views we analyse in Chapter III, is one example of many.
adequate material shape of the idea - in the form of the human body. At this stage sculpture replaces architecture as the leader among the arts: it puts this optimal material shape of the idea in the temple built by its predecessor. This stage represents the perfect balance between the spirit and its material form - the spirit is no longer "outside" this form but permeates it in its every aspect, and the form, on the other hand, is perfectly capable of representing the spirit. The only problem with this balance, however, is that the true nature of spirit is not material, but ideal. Art needs, consequently, to make one more step, to transcend the materiality of classical art and make this materiality subordinate to spirit. This transcending step is made by romantic art.\footnote{This is exactly the point at which it is easy to start seeing an inconsistency in Hegel's system where there is none - that is, if the absolute character of his idealism is not sufficiently recognised. The temptation here is to say that, since art is the sensuous realization of the Idea of Beauty, classical art must remain the ultimate stage and Romanticism is the decline of art. Given Hegel's love of ancient and classical literature, one cannot entirely exclude that he may have had moments when he thought so, perhaps especially when the new - emerging Romantic - music was concerned. Yet, when viewed in the larger context of his phenomenology, the spirit of art must transcend (aufheben) its own sensuality and turn into pure thought; this will be its redemption and highest fulfillment. The sense of ambivalence as to which artistic epoch is the summit of art for Hegel may be the result of Hegel's well-known reverence for the classical art. Perhaps, we have here the case when the philosopher's personal taste does not fully coincide with the outcomes of his philosophy.}
it has already sufficiently concretised itself in the course of its own evolution, i.e., its true nature, subjectivity and the "inner life," stand prominently over its objective outer manifestations. In other words, the sensuous embodiments of the spirit or the Idea are "internalised," acquire a much more subjective character than in both symbolic and classical art. Hegel seems to take for granted here the belief that, say, a pyramid is marked by more objectivity than a painting and, conversely, a poem is more subjective than a sculpture. It is among these "arts of the subjectivity" that we finally find music.

Painting, the first romantic art, reduces the spatiality still retained by sculpture from the previous stage to the principle of mere visibility - the three-dimensional world of the human form is replaced with the two-dimensional world of appearances created by the use of colour. Yet painting still continues to represent, even in two-dimensional form, the spatial relations among objects of the world. To bring the form of its material presence closer to its ideal nature the spirit needs to eliminate its dependence on space and find a medium that would correspond more adequately to its ideality. It finds such a medium in sound whereby space is at last transcended and art enters the realm of time. Music, the second romantic art, is the first temporal art in this evolution of the artistically portrayed Idea.

With music art becomes truly representative of the "inner
life," subjectivity, the realm of the ideal. Here the spirit revolves in its own sphere, the materiality of its sensuous forms is reduced almost to the minimum: the sound vanishes soon after it is produced and, in its fleeting movements, it expresses almost perfectly the ever-changing inner life of the spirit. The problem with music, though, is that it lacks the clarity of the Concept which, as was mentioned above, is the focal point in the realm of the spiritual for Hegel. Music does truly represent the life of the spirit but the life it is capable of representing is feeling, the spirit in the mode of emotion, pre-conceptual stirrings of the Idea.

The art that comes closest to the expression of the Concept (but still cannot express it in the manner ultimately required by the nature of the latter) is poetry, the art of the word. Here, according to Hegel's analysis, even the temporal element is removed into the background, and the conceptual content becomes the most prominent principle and foundation of the art. True, poetry still uses sound, and therefore still remains temporal in a degree, but the sound and the temporal are subservient to the conceptual in it. And if we remove even these subordinate elements from poetry and focus entirely on the life of the Concept what we shall obtain will no longer be art, but philosophy.

Thus, according to Hegel, music is the artistic expression of pure subjectivity of the spirit, or of the life of feeling, and it is incorporated as an integral part into a system of
the other arts. Its place in this system is determined, firstly, by the (spiritual) content it can present and, secondly, by its specific material. Now that we have briefly recapitulated the main points in the evolution of art in general as described in Hegel's aesthetics, we can have a closer look at music and examine Hegel's theory of its meaning in a more detailed way.

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Until this point we have been using the terms 'Idea,' 'the Ideal,' 'spirit,' 'the Concept' rather casually, i.e. without any attempt to discriminate among them. For our further analysis, however, it is crucial that we establish as accurately as possible in what sense Hegel was using them.

Being the central notion in Hegel's philosophy, the Concept is probably the most complex of all Hegelian categories. It emerges as the ultimate result of the development and interaction of a vast number of categories described in the Science of Logic and represents the peak not only of logic proper but also of the evolution of spirit, i.e., in Hegel's interpretation, the Concept plays an outstanding role both in logic and ontology. Here we shall discuss the structure of the Concept only so far as it has to do with art in general and music in particular.

Now the Concept, as we have said, has a rather complex
structure which is further complicated by the fact that it is not something fixed and stable but is moving and changing within itself. The primary elements it comprises are the universal, particular, and individual. These three categories (rich in content and their own "history" within themselves) are related in a dialectical way: the first is negated by the second and their mutual exclusion of each other is "sublated" in the third term (that contains both).

The Concept is the universal, which on the one hand negates itself by its own activity into particularization and determinacy, but on the other hand once again cancels this particularity which is the negative of the universal. ... Thus it is true individuality as universality closing only with itself in its particularizations.\(^5\)

The Concept therefore has both an ideal element in it, the universal, and a real element, the particular. However, this latter is not yet reality proper; the Concept as such is still too much on the abstract side and needs its own further modification to come closer to reality. This further modification is the Idea:

... the Concept is distinguished from the Idea by being particularization [an attribute of reality - V. M.] only in abstracto, since determinacy [another attribute of reality - V. M.] as it exists in the Concept, remains caught in the unity and ideal universality [attributes of ideality - V. M.] which is the Concept's element.\(^6\)

The Idea, in turn, also has a tripartite structure which


\(^6\)Ibid.
repeats in its essential elements that of the Concept:

Now the Idea as such is nothing but the Concept, the real existence of the Concept, and the unity of the two. For the Concept as such is not yet the Idea... But it is only when it is present in its real existence and placed in unity therewith that the Concept is the Idea.\(^7\)

The three elements that we have here are (i) the Concept; (ii) its real existence; and (iii) their unity. In this scheme (i) corresponds to the universal element in the Concept, (ii) to the particular, and (iii) to their unity, the individual. And it is when we enter the realm of the Idea that we come close to the threshold of art proper.

Art is the expression of the Idea as beauty. This "Idea as the beauty of art" is a special modification of the Idea as such:

... the Idea as the beauty of art is not the Idea as such, in the way that a metaphysical logic has to apprehend it as the Absolute, but the Idea as shaped forward into reality and as having advanced to immediate unity and correspondence with this reality. For the Idea as such is indeed the Absolute truth itself, but the truth only in its not yet objectified universality, while the Idea as the beauty of art is the Idea with the nearer qualification of being both essentially individual reality and also an individual configuration of reality destined essentially to embody and reveal the Idea.\(^8\)

It would be presumptuous to say that everything is clear to me in this quotation: to fully understand it requires knowledge of many branches of Hegel's philosophy other than aesthetics. What we can conclude from this is that the Idea as the beauty of art evolves from the Idea as such (which is also

\(^7\)Ibid., p. 106.

\(^8\)Ibid., p. 73.
the Absolute truth) when the latter modifies itself in such a way that it is brought closer to its implementation in reality. And when the Idea thus modified is finally brought into existence, it becomes the Ideal:

... the Idea and its configuration as a concrete reality shall be made completely adequate to one another. Taken thus, the idea as reality, shaped in accordance with the Concept of the Idea, is the Ideal.\(^9\)

The Ideal is thus such a state of affairs when the inner content is completely and adequately expressed in a "real" form.\(^10\) Now we can reconstruct the inner structure of the Ideal, which is the subject of art, distinguishing three layers in its makeup and proceeding from its outer boundary toward the center.

1. The **Ideal** is the unity of (i) the Idea and (ii) its real existence (in a completely adequate form).

2. The **Idea** is the unity of (i) the Concept and (ii) the real existence of the Concept.

3. The **Concept** is the unity of (i) the universal and (ii) the particular.

In its evolution, art implements these three spheres in a series of successive steps. The sphere of the Ideal taken in

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\(^9\)Ibid., pp. 73-74.

\(^10\)It is not quite clear whether this "reality" implies sensuous form or the Ideal still remains a mental phenomenon. If art strives after the implementation of the Ideal then this suggests that the latter still remains, as it were, ideal entity. The structure of the Concept in its relation to the Idea of Beauty, consequently, is a multi-layered mental, or spiritual, thing as contrasted with a material object, and the next step would be its embodiment in sensuous material.
such a form where its inner structure is yet undisclosed is expressed by symbolic art. The sphere of the Idea in which, again, its inner content is not yet seen distinctly is realized in classical art. And finally, the sphere of the Concept is represented (but only inasmuch as it is accessible for artistic penetration) by romantic art.

The whole process can thus be viewed as art's gradual approach to the innermost point of the life of spirit - to the Concept. Upon this scheme, art increasingly internalises itself, its content is increasingly differentiated within itself, and, in keeping with this tendency, the means with which it expresses this content are increasingly stripped of their materiality, are also internalised, subjectivised - to the point where they cease to exist --as material--altogether and with them art ceases to be too. For art's very essence is the externalisation of the Idea, art cannot subsist without a sensuous medium in which the Idea is embodied and without embodying the Idea in this sensuous medium. Thus art, in Hegel's philosophy, displays a dramatic contradiction between its final purpose and its very existence. This contradiction is resolved not by art itself but by philosophy which is therefore the "redeemer" and ultimate justification of art.\footnote{We do not wish to simplify the relationship between art and philosophy and the above is only a crude rendition of Hegel's solution to this problem. The problem is very large indeed, much debated already, and bound to generate even more debate in the future.}

What is the place and the role of music in this process?
Music steps forth as the most prominent expression of the spirit's life in the middle of the third, romantic, stage. In painting, the content has already become subjective:

this inner life (depicted by painting - V. M.) is ideal and particular personality, the mind turned into itself out of its corporeal existence (i.e., in contrast to architecture and sculpture - V. M.), the subjective passion and feeling of character and heart, which are no longer totally diffused in the external shape, but precisely in that shape mirror spirit's inner self-apprehension and its preoccupation with the sphere of its own circumstances, aims, and actions.\(^{12}\)

The material which painting uses for the expression of this subjective content, however, is still too persistent and too much related to space, it still remains "the external shape" of the spirit:

No matter how far we plunge or immerse ourselves in the subject-matter, in a situation, a character, the forms of a statue or a picture, no matter how much we may admire such a work of art, may be taken out of ourselves by it, may be satisfied by it - it is all in vain: these works of art are and remain independently persistent objects and our relation to them can never get beyond a vision of them.\(^{13}\)

Music resolves this tension between the spatial and objective character of painting's material and the subjectivity of its content.

If the inner life, as is already the case in the principle of painting, is in fact to be manifested as a subjective inwardness, the genuinely correspondent material cannot be of such a kind that it persists on its own account. Consequently we get a different mode of expression and communication where objectivity does not enter into its sensuous element as a spatial figure in order to have stability there, and we need a material


\(^{13}\)Ibid., p. 891.
which for our apprehension is without stability and even as it arises and exists vanishes once more. This obliteration not of one dimension only [as in painting] but of the whole space, purely and simply, this complete withdrawal, of both the inner life and its expression, into subjectivity, brings completely into being the second romantic art - music."

Sound, the material of music, is not the immobile spatial shape of an object but is produced by the movement of the object, be it the column of air or a string. As the vibration occurs, the object moves away (however slightly) from its original position but then stops this movement, or, as Hegel puts it, "negates" it, and returns to its original position. Thus sound represents, or is the result, of what Hegel calls "the double negation," i.e. first the negation of immobility and then the negation of movement\(^1\), - which makes it an almost perfect medium for the expression of the life of the Concept for the latter is "infinite negativity" for ever "returning into itself."\(^1\)

What kind of content, what aspect in the inner life of the spirit is expressed by this material? In painting, as we saw in a quotation above, this content was "particular personality"; and just like in the domain of art's material

\(^{14}\)Ibid.

\(^{15}\)"The cancellation of space... consists here only in the fact that a specific sensuous material sacrifices its peaceful separatedness, turns to movement, yet so vibrates in itself that every part of the cohering body not only changes its place but also struggles to replace itself in its former position. The result of this oscillating vibration is sound or a note, the material of music" (ibid., p. 890).

\(^{16}\)Ibid., p. 109.
the spatiality of painting is transformed into the temporality of music, in the domain of art's content the particular personality of painting is transformed into the universal subjectivity of music:

... what alone is fitted for expression in music is the object-free inner life, abstract subjectivity as such. This is our entirely empty self, the self without any further content.\(^{17}\)

This "emptiness" of music's content resembles the emptiness of architecture's temple, and so music bears a resemblance to symbolic art:

In architecture the subject-matter to be impressed on architectonic forms does not go wholly into the shape as it does in sculpture and painting but remains distinct from it as merely an external environment for it; so too in music, as a properly romantic art, the classical identity between the inner life and its external existence is dissolved again in a similar, even if opposite, way to what was the case in architecture which, as a symbolic mode of portrayal, could not attain that unity.\(^{18}\)

Thus, despite its very substantial accomplishments, music still remains for Hegel a somewhat deficient art: there is too much subjectivity in it, music is simply subjective, and this abstract subjectivity, resembling in its vagueness the abstract spirit embodied by symbolic art, is not enough to adequately represent also the objectivity of ideas.

It [music - V. M.] does have a content too but not in the sense that the visual arts and poetry have one; for what it lacks is giving to itself an objective configuration

\(^{17}\)Ibid., p. 891.

\(^{18}\)Ibid., p. 893.
whether in the forms of actual external phenomena in the
effects of objectivity of spiritual views and ideas.19

This excerpt shows us that we should distinguish between
two kinds of objectivity which music’s content misses: first,
the objectivity of material things and, second, the
objectivity of ideas. The latter’s objectivity consists in the
fact that, even being entirely within the (subjective) sphere
of the spirit, they can nevertheless "stand before" the
spirit’s eye, be contemplated by it as something distinct,
i.e. as "objects." Music’s content lacks precisely this
distinctness, music cannot express anything with the degree of
definiteness which the other arts possess. The spirit of music
cannot separate itself from its own object which means that
this object is spirit itself, its own returning to itself
without ever leaving. Yet the Concept, as the focal point of
the life of the spirit, is a concrete totality, i.e., it has
within itself distinct elements, and music must therefore
yield to another art that would be more capable of expressing
this nature of the Concept.

As we could see in our analysis of the origins of romantic
art, it springs from the sphere of the Concept. In this sphere
we found the universal, particular, and individual. According
to this division and our subsequent examination, painting
expresses the particular element of the Concept, while music
the universal. The only remaining element in the Concept’s

19Ibid., p. 893.
structure is the individual, and obviously this element will be the content of the third romantic art, poetry.

Poetry, the art of speech, is the third term, the totality [we saw this third term called 'individual' earlier - V. M.], which unites in itself, within the province of the spiritual inner life and on a higher level, the two extremes, i.e. the visual arts and music. For, on the one hand, poetry, like music, contains that principle of the self-apprehension of the inner life as inner, which architecture, sculpture, and painting lack; while, on the other hand, in the very field of inner ideas, perceptions, and feelings it broadens out into an objective world which does not altogether lose [as happens in the case of music - V. M.] the determinate character of sculpture and painting.\(^{20}\)

Music supersedes painting and, in fact, the whole realm of the visual arts only to be superseded in turn by poetry, the truly "conceptual" art. Music's content is contrasted with its opposite "extreme"-that of the visual arts and then this opposition is resolved by the content of poetry which is capable of presenting objective reality but in the form congenial with the inner nature of the spirit, i.e. in the form of ideas.

The content of music oscillates between an entirely disappearing and highly intense presence. On the one end of this oscillating movement are musical sounds completely devoid of all meaning:

... amongst all the arts music has the maximum possibility of freeing itself from any actual text as well as from the expression of any specific subject-matter, with a view to finding satisfaction solely in a self-enclosed series of the conjunctions, changes,

\(^{20}\)Ibid., p. 960.
oppositions, and modulations falling within the purely musical sphere of sounds.\textsuperscript{21}

On the other end is music accompanying a text (or accompanied by a text) or music that can suggest meaning through sounds by means other than an immediate connection with a text; it is that music which is

a spiritually adequate expression in the sensuous medium of sounds and their varied counterpoint" and rises "to being a genuine art, no matter whether this content has its more detailed significance independently expressed in a libretto or must be sensed more vaguely from the notes and their harmonic relations and melodic animation.\textsuperscript{22}

Hegel is thus aware of the possibility of a purely formal music, i. e. that is concerned only with its own, strictly musical, content. Music’s stature as a fine art, however, is contingent on the presence of content or meaning that is not exclusively musical and form-related because otherwise

music remains empty and meaningless, and because the one chief thing in all art, namely spiritual content and expression is missing from it, it is not yet strictly to be called art.\textsuperscript{23}

We see here that the question of meaning in music is not the question as to whether it can or cannot express anything extramusical at all; there seems to be no doubt in Hegel’s mind that it can. The question is whether it does express something spiritual or not, and this determines whether it is art or not.

\textsuperscript{21}Ibid., pp. 901-2.

\textsuperscript{22}Ibid., p. 902.

\textsuperscript{23}Ibid.
There are some further qualifications of the possible content of music. Music can have as its content everything that can be conceived as feeling. This emotional content can be, according to Hegel of two main kinds: one is what he calls "the substantial inner depth of subject-matter as such"; the other is "the life and energy of a subject-matter in a single subjective inner life." The first is exemplified by the representation of a universal content, as e.g. in a Crucifixus of a religious service, where, Hegel says,

the deep elements lying in the nature of Christ's Passion, e.g. this divine suffering, death, and entombment, are often so treated that what is expressed in not a subjective feeling of emotion of sympathy or individual human grief at these events, but as it were the thing itself, i.e. the profundity of its meaning moves through the harmonies and their melodic course.

In other words, for Hegel there seems to be an inherent emotional content of universal significance in the above biblical story susceptible of musical expression. This is distinguished from the second, subjective emotional "accompaniment" to life's events and people's actions:

This subjective feature, feeling namely, may accompany every human deed and action, every expression of the inner life, and it may be aroused even by the perception of every action and the apprehension of any occurrence.

That is in this case, it is the subject that confronts those events and actions whose feelings music expresses. Although

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24Ibid.

25Ibid., p. 935.

26Ibid.
distinguished between themselves, these two modes of content converge in the composer's creation and the listener's apprehension of music since they both are addressed to and arouse equally emotional response to it.

These two kinds of content are a reflection of the duality present within the sphere of feeling itself.

As in self-conscious thinking, so here too there already enters into our vision and ideas the necessary distinction between (a) the self that sees, has ideas, and thinks, and (b) the object of sight, ideas, and thought.

In feeling, however, this duality is only implicit, not yet brought fully out "since there the thing felt is interwoven with the inner feeling as such, without any separation between them." 27

We cannot hope to discuss all aspects of meaning of music that emerge from the context of Hegel's theory: this must be the subject of a larger study. Outside the scope of this one there have been left the questions of the meaning of various elements of musical form, e. g. rhythm, harmony, and melody; of the relation of the word, or text, to musical expression, and others. As to the latter, we may point to the interesting fact--not devoid of interest to 20th-century musical aesthetics with its strong linguistic inclinations—that Hegel does not see the meanings of either music or language as something entirely separate from each other; there is

27Ibid., p. 904.
definitely for him a link between the two. In addition to this, musical meaning is defined contextually, i.e. it can only be understood in conjunction with, and in opposition to, the meanings of the other arts. As in other branches of his philosophy, Hegel's thought is capable of grasping distinctions within continuity, "individuals in the crowd," separate identifiable things in what may appear as a faceless flow—without either of the opposites disappearing from the thought's field of vision.

A few years ago William Desmond wrote about a "strange neglect suffered by Hegel's philosophy of art,"\(^\text{28}\) for which one can find many—often conflicting—reasons. If that observation is true, equally true is the fact that Hegel's philosophy of music has been neglected to a still greater extent. Unlike those of his two renowned 19th-century philosophical adversaries, A. Schopenhauer and F. Nietzsche, Hegel's musical aesthetics has hardly enjoyed any substantial popularity both among the general public and scholars of music. The irony of Desmond's remark for our case is that it is taken from a book where Hegel's philosophy of music is not mentioned even once, and no one can accuse Desmond of anti-Hegelian prejudices.

I am often uneasy about attempts to judge the past by the degree of its usefulness to the "better-knowing" present; I

think that the present's claims to better knowledge are not always entirely reasonable—we, humans, can unlearn almost just as well as we learn. Therefore I do not want to go into the whole issue of defending the significance Hegel's theory for posterity, that is, for us. Yet, anticipating somewhat the conclusions of this study, I would say this much: none of the authors discussed below has been able to transcend the fundamental boundaries set by Hegel's discussion of the matter. All of them repeated and developed, without realising this and with widely varying degrees of success, various aspects of Hegel's doctrine. In what may seem a cumbersome and not very charming form, Hegel was nevertheless able to make a comprehensive statement about music that is relevant today and may be even more relevant in the future. Foucault is right: when we arrive where we are going, we may find Hegel there, "smiling and knowing."
Chapter II

The Immediate Objectification of the World Will

1.

Arthur Schopenhauer published *The World as Will and Idea* in 1816 - four years earlier than Hegel started lecturing on aesthetics in Berlin and about two decades before those lectures were first published. Schopenhauer's aesthetics were not therefore a direct response to Hegel's in historical terms. Schopenhauer made his philosophy sound indeed as a rather hostile rejoinder to post-Kantian philosophers like Fichte, partially Schelling, and especially Hegel, but this can only be said about Hegel's philosophy in general, not his aesthetics. Given Schopenhauer's vehement criticism of Hegel, one is justified in expecting the former's philosophy of art to be radically different from the latter's. Yet the two philosophers were contemporaries and, despite their differences, lived in the same historical period, spoke largely similar philosophical language, and finally belonged to that part of world philosophy which is normally called "German idealism." This is perhaps the reason why, at the first reading of their writings on aesthetics, one is impressed by many similarities between the two philosophies of
Both systems include largely similar divisions of the arts, speak of an ascending progress of art's content from one of the arts to the other, and recognise a certain hierarchy among the arts. The greatest similarity, however, resides in the fact that both Hegel and Schopenhauer ascribe to art a profound and meaningful relation to the very essence of the world's life, see art as an important sphere of human activity where a vital content of being is expressed and disclosed, and, as a result of this, view art as an elevating and liberating power for the human spirit - no matter how differently this elevation and liberation are seen in the philosophers' respective worldviews.

On the other hand, the greatest contrast between Hegel's and Schopenhauer's metaphysics is that, for Hegel, the centre of the world's life is the Concept, the Idea, the ultimate light of the absolute Reason, whereas Schopenhauer places will at the core of being, an irrational, unconscious, and self-contradictory appetitive urge, "endless striving," that drives all there is from dissatisfaction and pain to brief moments of satisfaction, to new longing, new pain, new brief attainment,

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The world, according to Schopenhauer, is the objectification of will. The Schopenhauerian will objectifies itself in Platonic Ideas, eternal, singular, and unchanging forms, which are further multiplied into the individual objects of the world. Thus the external, objective side of the world is idea, whereas the inner aspect of it is will.

The will," says Schopenhauer, "is the 'in-itself' of the Platonic Idea, which fully objectifies it; it is also the 'in-itself' of the particular thing and of the individual that knows it, which objectifies it incompletely.\[^3\]

We find three distinct and interconnected—however problematically—domains in Schopenhauer's metaphysics: will, "Platonic" Ideas, and the particular things. Both the Platonic and Kantian legacies are obvious in this world-model.\[^4\]

\[^{2}\] Both Hegel and Schopenhauer considered Kant as their most significant predecessor. They both took departure from Kant but in two very different manners: the former "dissolved" Kant's thing-in-itself in the dialectical interplay of concepts, while the latter reinterpreted it as will.


\[^{4}\] The influence of Plato and Kant on Schopenhauer is commented upon in almost every analysis of his aesthetics. For a thorough and sensitive review of these influences see e. g. Arthur Hübscher’s The Philosophy of Schopenhauer in its Intellectual Context, translated by Joachim T. Baer and David E. Cartwright, The Edwin Mellen Press, Lewiston/Lampeter/Queenston, 1989, chapters V and VI. Hübscher’s book is also very valuable in that it incorporates a description of the cultural and intellectual ambience of Schopenhauer’s time. For more analysis of influences of previous and contemporary thinkers on Schopenhauer’s aesthetics see also Israel Knox’s article "Schopenhauer's Aesthetic Theory," in: Schopenhauer, His Philosophical Achievement, edited by Michael Fox, The Harvester Press--
ultimate depth of both the world and the human individual we find the same will, the universal purposeless appetite which is suffering, longing, and hurting within us. The human individual can temporarily free himself from the power of will through pure knowledge, withdrawal from volition, quiet contemplation; he can free himself permanently through ascetic resignation. The latter, resignation, is the saint's way of dealing with will; the former, knowledge, is achieved when the individual becomes a pure knowing subject. Schopenhauer thus describes this "knowing subject" and his act of knowledge of the Platonic ideas:

If, raised by the power of the mind, a man relinquishes the common way of looking at things... if he thus ceases to consider the where, the when, the why, and the whither of things and looks simply and solely at the what; if, further, he does not allow abstract thought, the concepts of the reason, to take possession of his consciousness, but, instead of all this, gives the whole power of his mind to perception, sinks himself entirely in this, and lets his whole consciousness be filled with the quiet contemplation of the natural object actually present... if thus the object has to such an extent passed out of all relation to something outside it, and the subject out of all relation to the will, then that which is known is no longer the particular thing as such; but it is the Idea, the eternal form, the immediate objectivity of the will at this grade; and, therefore, he who is sunk in this perception is no longer individual, for in such perception the individual has lost himself; but he is pure, will-less, painless, timeless subject of knowledge.¹

The knowledge obtained in this fashion is not philosophical, scientific, or metaphysical - it is artistic

²Ibid., p. 231.
and the knowing subject is, in the final analysis, an artist:

... what kind of knowledge is concerned with that which is outside and independent of all relations, that which alone is really essential to the world, the true content of its phenomena, that which is subject to no change, and therefore is known with equal truth for all time, in a word, the Ideas, which are the direct and adequate objectivity of the thing-in-itself, the will? We answer, Art, the work of genius.\(^6\)

Art is therefore capable of revealing the eternal truth of the world, and it is precisely this revelation that is its chief objective:

Unfolding and rendering distinct the Idea expressing itself in the object of every art, the Idea of the will which objectifies itself at each grade, is the common end of all the arts.\(^7\)

This peculiar "epistemological" orientation of art--and Schopenhauer can be seen here as digressing from Kant for whom aesthetic experience represented rather the opposite of cognition--the fact that it focuses on the perception of the Ideas, constitutes its identity as distinguished from other spheres of human activities, such as science. In Schopenhauer’s words:

... the object of art, the representation of which is the aim of the artist... is an Idea in Plato’s sense and never anything else; not the particular thing, the object of common apprehension, and not the concept, the object of rational thought and of science.\(^8\)

Concepts, the sustenance of science, are inferior to ideas in the sense that they are something concocted by human mind post

\(^6\)Ibid., pp. 238-39.

\(^7\)Ibid., p. 326.

\(^8\)Ibid., p. 301.
rem, i.e., after sorting through the things of the world, whereas Ideas are perhaps what makes those concepts, together with things, possible at all. Science and art, consequently, are both cognitive enterprises differing in that art is one cosmic step closer to the source of being and therefore a truer knowledge.

Despite the fact that music is not like architecture, sculpture, painting, or poetry at all, that "it stands alone, quite cut off from all the other arts" the cognitive thrust of the artistic endeavour is preserved and, in fact, sharply enhanced in it. This very special situation of music is rooted in the fact that "in it we do not recognise the copy or repetition of any Idea of existence in the world" but instead music is "the copy of will itself." In the metaphysical hierarchy of the Schopenhauerian universe, at least as far as the arts are concerned, it occupies the same place, or level, as the Platonic Ideas:

Music is as direct an objectification of the whole will as the world itself, nay, even as the Ideas, whose multiplied manifestation constitutes the world of individual things."

It is highly characteristic of Schopenhauer's whole method and way of thinking that this crucial principle, on which his whole philosophy of music is founded, remains unexplained,

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9Ibid., p. 330.
10Ibid., p. 333.
"Ibid.
i.e. it is an assumption arrived at through pure intuition. The philosopher thus describes this intuitive deduction:

I gave my mind entirely up to the impression of music in all its forms, and then returned to reflection and the system of thought expressed in the present work, and thus I arrived at an explanation of the inner nature of music and of its imitative relation to the world...\(^{12}\)

One cannot help noticing that the first stage of this cognitive process strikingly recalls how the "pure subject of knowledge" above attained to his visions of ideas--by "giving up his mind" to intuitive contemplation. The second stage, i.e. presumably reflection, is nothing but a leap from contemplation to a purely dogmatic postulate. Schopenhauer himself felt clearly that his "explanation" was not quite sufficient or adequate in philosophical terms--and admitted as much.

Yet I recognise the fact, he wrote, that it is essentially impossible to prove this explanation, for it assumes and establishes a relation of music, as idea, to that which from its nature can never be idea, and music will have to be regarded as the copy of an original which can never itself be directly presented as idea.\(^{13}\)

We should remember this important confession because it has to do with more than just the validity of this particular argument. In the meantime, we see that, thanks to the belief that artistic knowledge is superior to any other, music is elevated to what is perhaps the highest epistemological status in Schopenhauer's system since it stands in the closest

\(^{12}\)Ibid., p. 331-2.

\(^{13}\)Ibid.
connection to will possible for anything in the world and reveals will's life in phenomenal forms. An art like this cannot but have a rich meaning.

2.

Perhaps the most striking part of Schopenhauer's musical-metaphysical doctrine is the fact that, according to the latter, there is not a single component in music that is not imbued with deepest existential and metaphysical significance. Let us consider those components and the meaning attributed to them. In doing this, it may be helpful to divide the subject-matter in some manner which does not necessarily repeat the sequence of Schopenhauer's exposition. The hope is that, when presented this way, the theory may be treated in an orderly manner.

Music as a Whole

First let us look at music in its entirety. It is "a perfectly universal language"; it has a "serious and deep significance, connected with the inmost nature of the world

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14It should be noted, however, that this is where Schopenhauer shows perhaps the greatest affinity with Hegel's doctrine of music since in the latter every single component of music, down to its purely acoustic foundations, is full of spiritual meaning as well.

15The World as Will and Idea, p. 330.
and our own self"; it is "as direct an objectification of the whole will as... the Ideas"; it is "the copy of the will itself"; it stands in a parallel relation to the world; it "expresses the quintessence of life and its events"; it possesses a universality of expression "which is related indeed to the universality of the concepts, much as they are related to the particular things"; in this its universality "it resembles geometrical figures and numbers, which are the universal forms of all possible objects of experience"; it "exhibits itself as the metaphysical to everything physical in the world, and as the thing-in-itself to every phenomenon"; if anyone could "give a perfectly accurate, complete explanation of music... this would also be a sufficient repetition and explanation of the world in concepts... and thus would be the true philosophy"; it is "an unconscious exercise in metaphysics in which the mind does not know it is

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16Ibid., p. 331
17Ibid., p. 333.
18Ibid.
19Ibid.
20Ibid., p. 338.
21Ibid., p. 339.
22Ibid.
23Ibid., 340.
24Ibid., p. 342.
philosophizing"; from the purely empirical point of view, i.e. when its larger metaphysical significance is ignored, it is "simply means of comprehending directly and in the concrete large numbers and complex relations of numbers, which otherwise we could only know indirectly by fixing them in concepts"; and finally, as a symphony of Beethoven shows, its meaning is the "mere form without the substance" of all our feelings, emotions, and passions, "like a spirit world without matter."  

The complex of these statements shows that music is here viewed as: (i) the ultimate expression of the inexpressible, the will; (ii) thus the ultimate cognitive project; (iii) the nonconceptual "telling" of the ultimate truth of the world; and (iv) possessing purely formal spiritual-emotional content.

The Sound of Music

Interestingly, Schopenhauer’s and Hegel’s simultaneous similarity and difference is especially obvious in their treatment of sound. Both see in the process of the generation of sound a profound cosmic significance, yet, where Hegel sees the life of the Concept, Schopenhauer finds the movement of

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26Ibid., pp. 342-3

27Ibid., p. 235.
matter, "mass of the planet," which produces from itself, as overtones are produced from a note, "nature's bodies."

When... the low notes sound, says Schopenhauer, the high notes sound faintly, and it is a law of harmony that only those high notes may accompany a bass-note which actually already sound along with it of themselves... on account of its vibration. This is analogous to the fact that the whole of the bodies and organisations of nature must be regarded as having come into existence through gradual development out of the mass of the planet; this is both their supporter and their source, and the same relation subsists between the high notes and the bass. 28

Despite the obvious difference with Hegel's interpretation of the sonic material of music, the similarity runs very deep indeed. For both philosophers regard sound as one of the instances where perhaps the entire history of the world is shown in one penetrating glimpse: world as the product of the activity of thought—or of will.

Schopenhauer also finds metaphysical significance in the facts of auditory perception which are closely related, in keeping with the overall thrust of his theory, to the foundations of the world:

There is a limit of depth, below which no sound is audible. This corresponds to the fact that no matter can be perceived without form and quality, i. e. without the manifestation of a force which cannot be further explained, in which an Idea expresses itself, and, more generally, that no matter can be entirely without will. Thus, as a certain pitch is inseparable from the note as such, so a certain grade of the manifestation of will is inseparable from matter. 29

A higher level of the organisation of musical sound, that of

28Ibid., 334.

29Ibid.
the system of tones, carries an equally profound significance.

The System of Musical Tones

Schopenhauer interprets the well-known fact of acoustics whereby the "mathematically" correct sequence of tones yields what the human ear perceives to be "incorrect" intervals (the phenomenon that resulted in the modern tempered scale) as a parallel to the "fact" of his metaphysics:

We have seen... that notwithstanding the self-adaptation of all the phenomena of will to each other as regards their species... there yet remains an unceasing conflict between those phenomena as individuals, which is visible at every grade, and makes the world a constant battle-field of all those manifestations of one and the same will, whose inner contradiction with itself becomes visible through it. In music also there is something corresponding to this. A complete, pure, harmonious system of tones is not only physically but arithmetically impossible. The numbers themselves by which the tones are expressed have inextricable irrationality. There is no scale in which, when it is counted, every fifth will be related to the keynote as 2 to 3, every major third as 4 to 5, every minor third as 5 to 6, and so on.30

I am not a specialist on acoustics and will not attempt to assess the mathematical and physical soundness of the argument. It is clear, however, that this component of music, the mathematically irrational character of the relations among musical tones, signifies for Schopenhauer the endless strife among the various elements of the world. The emphasis, nevertheless, in this view of the system of musical tones on their irrational mutual relations is purely arbitrary because there are rational numbers that express these relations as

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30 Ibid., p. 343-4.
well (e. g. octave), as there is regularity and order even among the irrational ones. Though an endless row of decimal numbers may lurk in their depth, there is also a definitude about musical intervals as the very existence of the scale shows.

The Scale

The scale is another "metaphysical window" through which the order of things can be descried:

The definite intervals of the scale are parallel to the definite grades of the objectification of will, the definite species in nature. The departure from the arithmetical correctness of the intervals, through some temperament, or produced by the key selected, is analogous to the departure of the individual from the type of the species. Indeed, even the impure discords, which give no definite interval, may be compared to the monstrous abortions produced by beasts of two species, or by man and beast.  

The scale is the last step in the ascent from the material of music to music, musical compositions, proper. The intensity of metaphysical analogies grows as we approach this sphere.

The Four Parts of Musical Form

In accordance with the musical theory of his time, Schopenhauer sees musical form in terms of the combination and interaction of its four constitutive parts: the bass, tenor, alto, and soprano. Each of these, either by itself or combined with another (as e. g. tenor and alto) has its own meaning.

31Ibid., p. 334.
1. Bass:

I recognise, says Schopenhauer, in the deepest tones of harmony, in the bass, the lowest grades of the objectification of will, unorganised nature, the mass of the planet.\textsuperscript{32}

2. Tenor and alto, or "harmony":

Now, further, in the whole of the complemental parts which make up the harmony between the bass and the leading voice singing the melody, I recognise the whole gradation of the Ideas in which the will objectifies itself. Those nearer to the bass are the lower grades, the still unorganised, but yet manifold phenomenal things; the higher represent to me the world of plants and beasts.\textsuperscript{33}

3. Soprano, or melody:

Lastly, in the melody, in the high, singing, principal voice leading the whole and progressing with unrestrained freedom, in the unbroken significant connection of one thought from beginning to end representing a whole, I recognise the highest grade of the objectification of will, the intellectual life and effort of man. ... the melody has significant intentional connection from beginning to end. It records, therefore, the history of the intellectually enlightened will. ... it records the most secret history of this intellectually-enlightened will, pictures every excitement, every effort, every movement of it, all that which the reason collects under the wide and negative concept of feeling, and which it cannot apprehend further through its abstract concepts.\textsuperscript{34}

The significance of melody is the richest among all other elements of music, it is truly the crown of musical form for Schopenhauer, its flower. In it we have reached the highest intensity and the utmost depth of music's meaning. What follows after that can only be a further concretisation and

\textsuperscript{32}Ibid., p. 333. See also the quotation in the section "The Sound."

\textsuperscript{33}Ibid., p. 334.

\textsuperscript{34}Ibid., p. 335.
elaboration of the points that have already been made. The following most exotic and perhaps the most oft-quoted statement about the four parts of musical form sounds as a corollary to the above:

The four voices, or parts, of all harmony, the bass, the tenor, the alto, and the soprano, or the fundamental note, the third, the fifth, and the octave, correspond to the four grades in the series of existences, the mineral kingdom, the vegetable kingdom, the brute kingdom, and man.\textsuperscript{35}

Other Elements of Music

We shall be able to discuss these only briefly here. Rhythm is, along with harmony, a constitutive principle of melody and represents temporal symmetry in music, serving as a basis of the latter’s affinity with architecture.\textsuperscript{36} It also influences the progress of melody through "disunion and reconciliation" with harmony\textsuperscript{37}, and this struggle is, in turn, "the copy of the origination of new wishes, and then of their satisfaction."\textsuperscript{38} The dynamics of musical form are expressive of feeling and action:

The short intelligible subjects of quick dance-music seem to speak only of easily attained common pleasure. On the other hand, Allegro maestoso, in elaborate movements, long passages, and wide deviations, signifies a greater, nobler effort towards a more distant end, and its final attainment. The Adagio speaks of the pain of a great and

\textsuperscript{35}Ibid., p. 231.

\textsuperscript{36}Ibid., pp. 239-41.

\textsuperscript{37}Ibid., pp. 241-2.

\textsuperscript{38}Ibid., p. 242.
noble effort which despises all trifling happiness.\textsuperscript{39}

The significance of the major and minor modes is hardly novel and quite obvious: pain and deliverance from it\textsuperscript{40} or serenity and sadness.\textsuperscript{41} And finally, in the change of key from one to another, presumably a remote one, there is an echo (both Platonic and oriental) of metempsychosis:

The transition from one key to an entirely different one, since it altogether breaks the connection with what went before, is like death, for the individual ends in it; but the will which appeared in this individual lives after him as before him, appearing in other individuals, whose consciousness, however, has no connection with his.\textsuperscript{42}

We have not exhausted the theme of course, and further analysis of Schopenhauer's theory of musical meaning can yield even more observations about it. Yet with these results the point is clear enough: all aspects of music, according to this theory, are intensely meaningful both in terms of feelings of individuals and in terms of the entire cosmic picture of the world, "the picture of the rhythm of metaphysical being in its innermost reality that pulsates within us."\textsuperscript{43} Music is systematically linked, through an extensive "network" of relations, such as objectification and parallelism (or

\textsuperscript{39}Ibid., p. 337.

\textsuperscript{40}Ibid.

\textsuperscript{41}Ibid., p. 243.

\textsuperscript{42}Ibid., pp. 337-8.

analogy), to both will and the world of particular things. There is a certain order to these relations: the more basic elements of music correspond to the more basic elements of the world-model (the sequential, grade-by-grade principle of the generation of harmonics, for example, corresponds to grade-by-grade process of evolution of "nature's bodies" out of "the mass of the planet"); the more highly developed elements of music, such as melody, stand in parallel relation to the more complex and developed elements of the world, such as the intellectual life of the individual. At the same time, relations among the elements of music reflect those among the elements of the world. And finally, music taken in its entirety expresses the entirety of the world's meaning.

3.

Music for Schopenhauer is undoubtedly the grandest metaphysical project among all of the arts. Will is the center of the world's life, its core and driving power. From this core spring the eternal immutable forms, Platonic Ideas, that, in contrast to will, constitute the realm of clarity and distinctness. From these clear and immutable ideas, in turn, the world of phenomena is generated, with all its instability, multiplicity, and transience—the world of things and futility of human life. Music, however, is not quite in this picture; it is attached to the world will directly and stands parallel to the realm of ideas, without coinciding with it. We can know
the essence of the world’s life through artistic contemplation in general but through music we come closest to knowing it because among all the objectifications of will music is the most immediate one.

This project, however, is not free from some very profound inconsistencies. While we agree—at least to a large extent—with Georg Simmel in that "Schopenhauer’s explanation is the most meaningful that has ever been given to music," we cannot help seeing certain difficulties for this theory. The most prominent such difficulty is the problem of the famous "parallelism" between music and the world. It is not entirely clear what Schopenhauer means by "parallelism," what kind of creature it is, but his intent as to maintaining the distinction between it and the immediate and direct relation of music to will is quite evident. Parallelism is thus such a connection between music and the world whereby the former may be infinitely close to the latter in its significance and yet remain for ever separated from it. The gap is impenetrable to the degree to which it is unclear how Ideas can spring from will.\(^4^5\)

Either will is a Platonic demiurg, and then there must be "a method to its madness" and hence some regularity to its

\(^{44}\)Ibid., p. 93.

\(^{45}\)The difficulty of explaining how this may happen has not escaped students of Schopenhauer’s doctrine. For a discussion of this problem see e. g. W. Desmond’s article we quoted above (op. cit., pp. 109-11).
inner life, or it is as irrational as Schopenhauer wants us to believe, and then it is entirely impossible to imagine how the frozen silhouettes of Ideas can be created by its sheer dynamism.\textsuperscript{46} Or, in other words, either there is some demonstrable connection between will and the world, and then "parallelism" is an uninterrupted association between music and phenomena; or there is no such connection, and then all talk of parallelism is just this—mere talk with little substance to it. In the latter case, needless to say, the grandiose metaphysical project simply collapses, and the problem of musical meaning is suspended in the rare atmosphere of conjecture.

The problem of objectification of will in ideas (as well as in music) and, further, of ideas in multiple things is of the same kind that the problem of the relation between Kant’s "thing-in-itself" and phenomena, and it is a problem of the same magnitude for both the teacher and the disciple. Schopenhauer tried to look beyond the threshold set by Kant at the entrance to the "thing-in-itself" and what he saw there was the dark movement of will. But the moment where this dark movement transforms itself into something other than itself remained inaccessible to his philosophic vision. As D. W. Hamlyn put it,

\footnote{The difficulty is further confounded if we try to solve the riddle of phenomena's generation from Ideas.}
The world as will has a considerable grandeur. The world as will does not, however, get rid of the world as representation, and although there could be the former without the latter, but not vice versa, it cannot be said that as things are there is just the will. But why things should be as they are, why there is a world as representation at all, remains something of a mystery.\textsuperscript{47}

It is the same mystery that underlies Schopenhauer’s confession that the connection between music and will is inexplicable in terms of his system. This is the point where Schopenhauer’s musical aesthetics is radically different from Hegel’s. Hegel’s 'subjectivity' is a necessary facet of the spirit as the latter is interpreted in his philosophy; this facet evolves from, and is part of, theoretically understandable and explicable process--that is, once Hegel’s terms are accepted or at least grasped. At the same time, it is between the concepts of 'subjectivity' and 'will' that the greatest affinity of the two musical aesthetics is found. Subjectivity, the inner life as such, i. e. merely inner, not marked by any objectivity at all, is virtually a twin of Schopenhauer’s will which is also the inner essence of the world and everything in it. Subjectivity is as mute and blind as will, knows nothing but itself, revolves within its own sphere but strives to get out, objectify itself, get to know itself (hence its transformation into the more conceptually explicit spirit of poetry), and thus "redeem" itself--just like the random power of will is neutralised by knowledge. It

appears therefore that both philosophers speak of one and the same kind of content of music, and while one gives an astonishingly profound theoretical analysis of it the other presents an intuitive, phenomenological description of it with an equally astonishing power of vision. For philosophy, however, to see is not enough: theoreia is more than intuitive contemplation, the latter is merged in it with logical explanation. This is what is lacking in Schopenhauer’s theory, as we saw above. There is an appeal to the mysterious before which intelligence must bow. But in the depth of this mystery is the missing link without which the whole notion of expression becomes seriously suspect--and with it the notion of meaning in music.

This is precisely how the next author in our sequence came to view musical meaning: when the more general--and essentially Romantic--foundations of Schopenhauer’s philosophy started to give way to a new Zeitgeist, that of modernity, Eduard Hanslick vigorously proclaimed that all previous philosophising about the content of music was defunct and that whatever meaning there is in music must be looked for nowhere else but in its own sounds. What both Hegel and Schopenhauer valued most in music, its spiritual content, no longer provided any fascination to the new frame of mind; content-less form of music became its most important message.
Chapter III

Sounding Forms

1.

Eduard Hanslick was not a philosopher; he was a musical critic in nineteenth-century Vienna. Although his answer to the question what music means is based on certain presuppositions and assumptions, he did not argue his case for a new musical aesthetic from a comprehensive philosophical system. And although those assumptions and presuppositions determine the nature of his solution to the problem (as they do in all cases), most of them are either not spelled out clearly or not elaborated upon. There is no original or systematic philosophy in Hanslick’s writings to speak of. In fact, when compared to the two previous authors who created vast and original systems that incorporate musical aesthetics springing from the very foundations of their thought, it is surprising that someone like Hanslick should cause any ripples at all on the surface of philosophical discourse on music. And yet he did, which in itself is a commentary on that discourse.

Hanslick’s most notable contribution to the development of musical aesthetics was perhaps his oft-quoted definition of music: "tönend bewegte Formen," "sounding forms in motion," as it is sometimes translated in English. He argued for this
definition, where the stress is on the "forms," with no less passion than Richard Wagner spent on defending his idea of the new opera, "music drama." The further affinity between them is that, in the heat of the argument, both were often theoretically careless and yet both were following a tacit common course, were carried by the same historical undercurrent, although by no means can we say that both have left an equally profound trace in the history of music.

The main thrust of Hanslick's argument is anti-emotionalist, i.e., it is a criticism of the view that music's main objective is to portray emotions. This criticism obviously stems from a view directly opposed to both Hegel and Schopenhauer who, as thinkers informed by Romanticism, never for a moment questioned music's ability and "artistic duty" to convey feelings. However, Hanslick's invectives against the emotionalist view have very little to do with the actual content of the two philosophies of music analysed above. Schopenhauer is entirely ignored in the essay, and one wonders if Hanslick knew his philosophy of music at all, while arguments against Hegel are based on a superficial understanding of his thought and can hardly be taken seriously today.¹ Generally speaking, Hanslick's criticism applies only to such a crude version of emotionalism that no serious

¹Later we shall deal with the more intricate issue of the presence of similar motifs in Hegel's and Hanslick's views of music that have been interestingly juxtaposed by Carl Dahlhaus.
philosopher can ever be suspected or accused of wanting to defend.

In other words, Hanslick's project could have hardly taken off unless a larger power had an interest in it. The mention of Zeitgeist in the end of the previous chapter was not unintentional: the spirit of new times was carrying Hanslick on the crest of its waves. It was modernity\(^2\), the most contradictory and complex epoch ever; as we already intimated above, Hanslick was just as much part of its beginnings as his main adversary Richard Wagner. It is this epoch that replaces the term 'content' with 'meaning' in its interpretation of what music is "saying" to us and, where it has been able to do away with philosophical idealism, has to struggle with the problematic of meaning again and again without any conclusive outcome.

Hanslick's views on music have often been characterised as,

\(^2\)Carl Dahlhaus, for example, observes that "Hanslick's... thesis that 'forms activated by sounding' are 'uniquely and alone the content and object of music'... undoubtedly expresses a fundamental esthetic experience of nineteenth century 'modernism': the experience that form in art, rather than being a mere manifestation of a thought of a feeling, is a thought in itself." See in: The Idea of Absolute Music, translated by Roger Lustig, University of Chicago Press, Chicago and London, 1989, p. 152.

\(^3\)"The question of meaning..." writes Edward Lippman of twentieth-century musical aesthetic theory, "has superseded the traditional problem of emotional content (which has derived in turn from conceptions of emotional expression and emotional effects). The step from content to meaning seems to have taken place as a kind of formalization." See in: A History of Western Musical Aesthetics, University of Nebraska Press, Lincoln and London, 1992, p. 352.
and in fact have come to epitomise, the theory called 'formalism.' Taken to its extreme (which has hardly ever actually happened) formalism would insist that music is devoid of any extramusical content and meaning altogether. As we shall presently see, Hanslick cannot be said to hold such a radical and unsupported view: his theory is after all more complex and interesting. The reputation, nevertheless, is far from groundless, in a large measure because Hanslick's formalism is an entrenched position founded on general aesthetic precepts that inform his approach. One such precept is the formal understanding of beauty.

The beautiful, strictly speaking, he contends, aims at nothing but a form which, though available for many purposes according to its nature, has, as such, no aim beyond itself.4

While nineteenth-century formalism may not owe all of its propensities to Kant, the influence of the latter's aesthetics is certainly felt in this statement.5 Hanslick's musical


5This connection is noted by e. g. Edward Lippman: "Nineteenth-century formalism in aesthetics doubtless has its chief source in Kant's Critique of Judgment (1790). ... Kant considers art in the light of cognition, for it is cognition that he takes as the province of philosophy in general. But it is form that we know, not the material that is formed. And aesthetics, which is concerned with nature as well as art, deals with judgment and with the pleasure that is attached to the apprehension of form. This pleasure expresses the formal purposiveness of an object in its appearance as perceived. It is form, therefore, that is judged to be the ground of aesthetic pleasure, not sensation or the material in which the aesthetic object is realized; the object is then called beautiful" (A History of Western Musical Aesthetics, University of Nebraska Press, Lincoln & London, 1992, p. 292).
experience, however, was light-years removed from Kant’s: by the second half of the nineteenth century Romanticism had finally conquered music,\(^6\) even if it had all but lost literature, and it was this new musical, as well as overall cultural experience that made Hanslick’s aesthetics substantially different from Kant’s, at least in one important respect. For Kant, music was present somewhere on the very fringes of the intellectual-cognitive sphere; for Hanslick, music is in the very centre of his life’s interest, perhaps the highest spiritual pursuit of humanity. This attitude alone is enough to make form something greater than it was for the founder of modern formalism.

In Hanslick’s aesthetics, the objective of art is, of course, formal: art gives form to some material—be it the shape of a natural object, as in painting, or a conception, as in poetry. In music this formal function of art reaches its apogee because, according to Hanslick, music is distinguished from the other arts by a complete merging of its form and content:

Now in music substance and form, the subject and its working out, the image and the realized conception, are mysteriously blended in one undecomposable whole. This complete fusion of substance and form is exclusively

\(^6\)This fact is not sufficiently recognised in Lippman’s treatment of the roots of 19th-century formalism. In his encyclopedic book quoted above, Lippman traces Kantian influences—that are indeed very strong—on formalism too directly and straightforwardly, underestimating the enormous changes in the cultural climate from Kant’s essentially classical time to Hanslick’s time of Romanticism in music and (incipient) modernism in the other arts.
characteristic of music, and presents a sharp contrast to poetry, painting, and sculpture, inasmuch as these arts are capable of representing the same idea and the same event in different forms.  

Here already we see an important ambiguity in Hanslick's argument: he does not deny the presence of content, or "substance," in music but asserts that this content is identical with form. Carl Dahlhaus very perceptively analyses this twist in the formalist reasoning, discerning its dependence on Hegelian dialectical logic. (I apologise for the following lengthy quotation but Dahlhaus' insight is very interesting and important for our discussion.)

In the historical context of ca. 1850, Hanslick's doctrine implies an exposure to Hegelianism, the reigning philosophy of the 1830s and 1840s. (To be precise, the exposure was to the Hegelianism that had entered the common parlance of intellectuals rather than to Hegel's actual texts.) Hegel had defined the beautiful as the "physical manifestation of the idea" [sinnliches Scheinen der Idee]. ("Scheinen" here means both "to appear" and, in the Neoplatonic tradition, "to shine forth.") And Hanslick adopted the difference between idea and appearance in order to be able to define the beautiful in music, the subject of his treatise; unlike Hegel, however, he did not determine the sounding phenomenon to be appearance and "thoughts and feelings" to be idea or (as Hegel also said) content, but rather sought the idea of content in the specifically musical aspect. The "idea," however, which appears as "musical idea" in the musical material, Hanslick called "form." In his esthetic, form is therefore not the manifested form, but the form of the nature of the thing: "inner form," as the ancient term, which Shaftesbury introduced into modern esthetics, is called. And the dictum regarding "tonally moving forms" that are supposed to serve as the "content" therefore means that sounding form--the acoustical substrate--represents the phenomenal element, whereas the form is the ideal, content-laden element. Form, as Hanslick understands it, is not the exterior but the interior, and in that sense "content" (in the Hegelian

7Ibid., p. 121-22.
sense, used only for the sake of polemical contrast). "The forms that form themselves out of tones are... spirit manifesting itself from the inside out." "Composing is a working of the spirit in material capable of [sustaining] the spirit" (geistesfähigem Material.) [quotations from Hanslick—V. M.]. This does not mean that Hanslick considers musical form, as traditionally conceived, to be spirit, but that, inversely, he determines the spirit of music to be form. The decisive condition of Hanslick's conception of form is the Hegelian concept of content—reversed into its opposite—and not the tradition of music theory. On the other hand, Hanslick's concept of musical form implies the two components that are connected to one another in the romantic idea of absolute music: form is specifically musical, dissolved from extramusical determinations and in that respect 'absolute'; and for just this reason, however, it is not only a manifested form, but spirit, essential form, form created from inside out.  

We shall deal with the relation between Hegel and Hanslick in a later section of this chapter and will attempt to show that Dahlhaus' interpretation, despite its depth and insight, is not without some significant problems. In the meantime, a number of themes in the above statement strike us as extremely important and astutely apprehended. The first such theme is the inherent dialectic of the formalist argument. Content is exiled into form, and the result is meaningful form or formal meaning. This dialectic is, however, merely inherent, hidden inside the argument as its driving force but not recognised as such. Consequently, it is used as a clever but sporadic device and, instead of convincing, produces the impression of a trick, a hocus-pocus, or a paradox at best. But Dahlhaus is right: the only way to see this turn of thought in musical aesthetics as something more interesting than mere trickery is

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8Carl Dahlhaus, op. cit., p. 110-1.
to view it against the background of dialectical logic.

The second theme is the spiritual vision of form whereby the latter is not simply form but acquires a deep significance of its own. In this version of formalism, the form of music is spiritualised, regarded as something geistliches no matter what extramusical content is "attached" to it or whether it is attached at all. (We shall presently analyse various aspects of form's spirituality, or shall we say, intellectual component, ascertained in Hanslick's doctrine.) In spite of its numerous affinities to Romanticism, however, this spirituality must not be mistaken for that of Hegel or Schopenhauer: the spirit that breathes in Hanslick's aesthetic outlook has already been notably transformed. Again, Dahlhaus is correctly pointing to a kind of "inversion" of Hegelian spirituality in formalism.

After the collapse of Hegelianism as an "official" philosophy (and we cannot thank history enough for this collapse: nothing is less congenial with dialectic than the stupour-stricken air of officialdom), comprehensive philosophical systems were still much in fashion but no longer impervious to system-scepticism.

Formerly, the aesthetic principles of the various arts, Hanslick observes, were supposed to be governed by some supreme metaphysical principle of general aesthetics. Now, however, the conviction is daily growing that each individual art can be understood only by studying its technical limits and its inherent nature. "Systems" are gradually being supplanted by "researches" founded on the thesis that the laws of beauty for each art are
inseparably associated with the individuality of the art and the nature of its medium."

The sharpening of theory's focus on the specifically musical can only be applauded but it is not entirely clear why "researches" should preclude "systems." Apart from being self-serving, this theoretical stance is not consistent with Hanslick's own aspirations. Elsewhere in his treatise he slips into defending a certain systematic scheme of research and thus committing the fallacy of a double standard--one for the old systems, another for new ones:

To ascertain the nature of each musical factor, its connection with a specific effect--its proximate, not its ultimate cause--and, finally, to explain these particular observations by general laws, would be to establish that "philosophical foundation of music" to which so many writers aspire...

The effect of various elements of musical form, he continues, can only be accounted for "by placing specifically musical attributes in general aesthetic categories, and the latter under one supreme principle."\textsuperscript{10} From observation to proximate causes to categories to a supreme principle is a very systematic course of action indeed, and one wonders what is so wrong with a systematic approach after all.\textsuperscript{11} The issue of

\textsuperscript{9}Hanslick, op. cit., p. 8.

\textsuperscript{10}Ibid., p. 55.

\textsuperscript{11}Forty years after the book had been published Hanslick acknowledged (while explaining the absence of a sequel to his Vom Musikalisch-Schönen) the need for a systematic musical aesthetics, and, interestingly, he came to believe that such an aesthetic should be based on a historical view: "From this study [of music history--V. M.] I came to the conviction that a truly fruitful aesthetics of music would have to be either
following a systematic course is important here because it underscores a characteristic trait in Hanslick's argument: its inherent inconsistency and eclecticism. The latter will become more obvious below, as we proceed with our analysis while here we only attempted to point to the fact that lack of consistency is hardly accidental in Hanslick's theory but is rather a result of his skepticism (again, inconsistent) toward systems in general.

We also need to note in these brief remarks on Hanslick's overall philosophical position that in regard to the "general laws" mentioned above he espoused the view that can be described as 'naturalistic agnosticism.' Harmony, which is "certainly the sole and indestructible basis existing in nature, on which the principal relation of our music repose," is, according to Hanslick, nothing but "the spontaneous actions of nature." These "spontaneous" regularities need to be arranged by human creativity to become a proper material for music. To quote his aphoristic phrase, "man must ask before nature can reply." In the depth of these naturalistic foundations, however, there lurks the darkness of impenetrable.
mysteries. Speaking about e.g. music's effects, he says:

   It is one of the most precious and inestimable secrets of nature that an art should have the power of evoking feelings entirely free from worldly associations and kindled, as it were, by the spark divine.¹³

The "natural affinities" among the elements of music are "occult" and "not demonstrable with scientific precision"¹⁴; a melody springs up in the composer's mind "thanks to that primitive and mysterious power whose mode of action will forever be hidden from us," and the origination of the musical theme "cannot be explained, but must simply be accepted as a fact"¹⁵ since its "ultimate ontological causes" are "inscrutable."¹⁶ The composer's mind is therefore a mystery,¹⁷ and so is music's "affinity for the nerves, those equally mysterious links in the invisible telegraphic [!--V. M.] connection between mind and body."¹⁸

The passing mention of the "spark divine" above is such that it is difficult to decide whether it is a glimpse of Hanslick's religious conviction slipping into his generally nonmetaphysical aesthetics or merely a stylistic mannerism.

To sum up, Hanslick's overall aesthetic view, or rather

¹³Ibid., p. 15.
¹⁴Ibid., p. 51.
¹⁵Ibid., p. 52.
¹⁶Ibid., p. 53.
¹⁷Cf. ibid., p. 54.
¹⁸Ibid., p. 78-79.
conglomeration of views, can be described as (i) formalism of an (ii) anti-emotionalist inclination marked by (iii) concessions to the emotionalist and idealist views, expounded (iv) unsystematically against the background of what we called (v) 'naturalistic agnosticism.' This does not exhaust, however, Hanslick's theory and can be considered only as a preliminary formulation. Although Hanslick himself admitted the predominance of the negative, anti-emotionalist component in his argument, there is some positive content in the latter as well to which we shall turn in the next section.

2.

We have already suggested that the primary importance of form in Hanslick's doctrine is supplemented by recognition of certain types of significance in music. The former separates Hanslick's position from both Hegel's and Schopenhauer's philosophic lineage whereas the latter reestablishes the connection with them. There are at least four types of meaning that Hanslick recognises in music: (i) the formal aspect of emotion; (ii) musical (auditory, as Hanslick calls them) ideas; (iii) the logical and intellectual element; and, finally, (iv) acoustic (again, Hanslick's term) ideas. Let us examine these types of meaning with special attention to how they compare with what Hegel and Schopenhauer determined as the content of music.

(i) While incapable of expressing definite emotions, or
rather the "what" of emotion, music, according to Hanslick, does have the ability to express the "how" of it.

Dynamically speaking, he observes, love may be gentle or impetuous, buoyant or depressed, and yet it remains love. This reflection alone ought to make it clear that music can express only those qualifying adjectives, and not the substantive, love itself.\(^{19}\)

And further:

What part of the feelings, then, can music represent, if not the subject involved in them? Only their dynamic properties.\(^{20}\)

Two foremost characterisations are set forth in these statements: some (a) indeterminate emotion is (b) moving in musical form. In other words, music expresses emotional activity, some kind of life but it is unclear (and cannot be clarified) what is living this life, what is moving "in there." Hanslick wants us to believe that, as far as musical expression is concerned, there is no carrier of this motion, that dynamic properties do not belong to anything. This assertion is combined with, and we would say is also a result of, the axiomatic belief that our intellect "can be exercised only on definite conceptions," which excludes the subject of music from "the range of living experiences" and makes it incorporeal.\(^{21}\)

Hegel would say to this that the intellect so defined is nothing other than Verstand, abstract understanding, and,

\(^{19}\)Ibid., p. 22.

\(^{20}\)Ibid., p. 24.

\(^{21}\)Ibid., p. 121.
indeed, cannot grasp the dynamic indeterminateness of the musical subject. But what is inaccessible to Verstand is readily available for a higher mental faculty, Vernunft, dialectic reason. Hanslick is unaware of the distinction. Hegel's "range of living experiences" included both the corporeal and incorporeal entities that he distinguished from one another but did not maintain that either is nonexistent. Hanslick postulates (and contradicts his own postulate two pages later) that "living experience" can only embrace corporeal and definite things and based on this declares the incorporeal things "not of this world" and indefinite conceptions (or conceptions of the indefinite) impossible.

Yet in his own way and with his own semi-naturalistic philosophical apparatus, Hanslick came to a view of musical meaning that repeats in its most essential characteristics that of Hegel. The purely subjective spirit Hegel saw as the content of music is also pure activity, "dynamic properties" behind which nothing can be discerned. If we forget for a moment the differences in the larger contexts of their outlooks, we shall see that both Hanslick and Hegel are describing the same thing when they speak of the "content" or the "subject" of music. In both cases we are presented with the purely formal aspect of feeling. The only, albeit decisive, contrast is that for Hegel this content is "object-free" whereas for Hanslick it is, for this very reason, nonexistent.
Much of the above comparison applies also to Hanslick's relation to Schopenhauer. We have already indicated the affinities between Schopenhauer's and Hegel's views in the previous chapter, and, by extension, it should be clear that at least some of the most salient of those affinities also hold in Hanslick's case. The will, this "thing-in-itself" of the world, resists objectification even in music, its most proximate analogue. As we remember, it cannot be represented as idea, that is to say, in Hanslick's world it simply eludes "the range of living experience." In other words, will's life is only represented in music as an activity of that which is further impenetrable, unseeable, and incomprehensible. Once again, what we have here are "dynamic properties" without their carrier, the outer form of feeling without its core, or, as Schopenhauer put it, "spirit world without matter."

Considering this, it is not so surprising that Hanslick's idiom is sometimes strikingly reminiscent of Schopenhauer's:

> On excluding... conceptions from consciousness, nothing remains but a vague sense of motion which at best could not rise above a general feeling of satisfaction or discomfort.\(^{22}\)

(ii) Further, there is a special class of musical or auditory "ideas" that music can express.

This class comprises all ideas which, consistently with the organ to which they appeal, are associated with audible changes of strength, motion, and ratio: the ideas of intensity waxing and diminishing; of motion hastening

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\(^{22}\)Ibid., p. 22, emphasis added--V. M.
and lingering; of ingeniously complex and simple progression, etc.\textsuperscript{23}

It is clear that, despite Hanslick's own classification, these "ideas" are not purely "auditory" nor are they "addressed" only to the organ of hearing. And even if they were, their characteristics relate them to a sphere much broader than that of auditory perception. "Intensity waxing and diminishing" can be an attribute not only of sound but perhaps of almost any aspect of our experience: visual (e. g. light, colour), tactile (e. g. vibration), psychological (emotional tension), etc. As for "ingeniously complex and simple progressions," these can hardly be either detected or distinguished from each other without the help of intellect. The eminence of the term 'auditory' here recedes in proportion to the universality of 'ideas.' Yet we should not fail to recognise the fact that it is important for Hanslick to catalogue these ideas in the department of auditory perception. At the same time, these auditory ideas appear to serve as a substrate for the dynamic properties of feeling expressed in music. The latter are "riding" on the former. The expression of the formal aspect of emotion is made possible by the presence of certain tonal relations in music, and it is far from accidental that in both cases we are dealing with dynamic objects.

There seems to be no immediate analogues to what Hanslick called 'auditory ideas' in Hegel's or Schopenhauer's theories,

\textsuperscript{23}Ibid., pp. 22-23.
and this very absence is a telling fact: they were not needed. In Hegel’s and Schopenhauer’s philosophies of music, as we showed above, every single element of music is heavily charged with universal significance, every element is an idea, at least to a degree, which makes the introduction of a special kind of "auditory ideas" superfluous. The problem for Hanslick’s formalism, however, in admitting this class of ideas in music is that formalism is "diluted" through this admission and is no longer a clearly delineated position.

(iii) More of this "dilution" occurs when Hanslick establishes the next type of meaning in musical form: that aspect of the latter which allows him to speak of "logic" and "intellectual element" in music:

... by laying the stress on musical beauty, we do not exclude the intellectual principle; on the contrary, we imply it as essential, for we would not apply the term "beautiful" to anything wanting in intellectual beauty; and in tracing the essential nature of beauty to a morphological source, we wish it to be understood that the intellectual element is most intimately connected with these sonorific forms <...> In music there is both meaning and logical sequence, but in a musical sense; it is a language we speak and understand, but which we are unable to translate.24

In Hanslick’s ‘musical ideas’ the accent is almost as much on ‘ideas’ as on ‘musical,’ underscoring his thesis of a complete merging of substance and form in music. Needless to say, this view corresponds almost perfectly to both Hegel’s and Schopenhauer’s. The difference is that, where the above two philosophers see a sign of far-reaching spiritual

24Ibid., p. 50.
associations, Hanslick wants to establish something like a conceptual void, a pure morphology, abstract tonal relations lacking any but relational significance. The outcome of this "draining" operation is meaningfully ambivalent: there is intellectual content in music but it is abstract to the point of being empty.

What Hanslick calls 'logic' in music, on the other hand, is, in an unexpectedly Hegelian manner, ontologically charged and relates music directly to both the microcosm of the individual and the macrocosm of nature (and in addition, to the other arts):

The logic in music, which produces in us a feeling of satisfaction, rests on certain elementary laws of nature which govern both the human organism and the phenomena of sound. It is, above all, the primordial law of "harmonic progression" which, like the curve lines in painting and sculpture, contains the germ of development in its main forms, and the (unfortunately almost unexplained) cause of the link which connects the various musical phenomena.\textsuperscript{21}

Schopenhauer’s parallelisms between music, nature, and human life have their roots hidden in the chaotic convolutions of will; Hanslick’s "logical" connections are derived from no less mysterious nature’s primordial causes. The already too familiar naturalistic-agnostic theme (which stands out in the treatise because of the equally frequent refrains about aesthetics being a science, a sphere of precise, objective knowledge) is especially strong in Hanslick’s treatment of musical logic:

\textsuperscript{21}Ibid., p. 51.
All musical elements are in some occult manner connected with each other by certain natural affinities, and since rhythm, melody and harmony are under their invisible sway, the music created by man must conform to them--any combinations conflicting with them bearing the impress of caprice and ugliness. Though not demonstrable with scientific precision, these affinities are instinctively felt by every experienced ear, and the organic completeness and logic, or the absurdity and unnaturalness of a group of sounds, are intuitively known without the intervention of a definite conception as the standard of measure, the tertium comparationis.\textsuperscript{26}

Another important facet of musical logic is its linguistic traits. The thought that music is an untranslatable language is augmented in the following:

It is a highly suggestive fact that, in speaking of musical compositions, we likewise employ the term "thought," and a critical mind distinguishes real thoughts from hollow phrases, precisely as in speech. The Germans significantly use the term \textit{Satz} ("sentence") for the logical consummation of a part of a composition, for we know exactly when it is finished, just as in the case of written or spoken sentence, though each has a logic of its own.\textsuperscript{27}

This observation is the precursor of a most influential line of discourse on music to be developed in the twentieth century at least by three major schools: hermeneutics, symbolism, and semiotics. Despite their differences, all three regarded language as an important paradigm that constitutes the medium for the philosophic investigation of music.

At the same time, the "music-versus-language" frame of discussion is perhaps as ancient as human culture itself. Interestingly, the theme of music completely separated from

\textsuperscript{26}Ibid.

\textsuperscript{27}Ibid., pp. 50-1.
language (text) is marginal in Hegel's musical aesthetics: he appears to view them more as a single "force field" where energy and intensity now increase, now subside yet are not confined to strictly demarcated areas. When combined, music and text flexibly adjust themselves to and complement each other. But even when they are separated music still must retain (to remain an art) a certain "linguisticity" in the shape of a subjective-conceptual content. Schopenhauer, on the contrary, is closer to Hanslick on this point in the sense that music is primarily a nonlinguistic "true philosophy" for him and the transition from music to speech is always a cognitive fall. Hanslick's focus is narrower, of course, in that it is confined to musical aesthetics instead of metaphysics. But in this specific field he believes that linguistic analogies should be restricted to the more abstract domain of utterance-like units and that attempts to carry them any further are an obscuration of (in this case, aesthetic) truth, or: the closer to language the farther from the musical truth.

(iv) The analysis of acoustic ideas brings us to the very heart of Hanslick's theory, to its most original part.

The object of every art is to clothe in some material form an idea which has originated in the artist's imagination. In music this idea is an acoustic one; it cannot be expressed in words and subsequently translated into sounds. The initial force of a composition is the invention of some definite theme... Thanks to that primitive and mysterious power whose mode of action will forever be hidden from us, a theme, a melody, flashes on the composer's mind. The origin of this first germ cannot be explained, but must simply be accepted as a fact. When
once it has taken the root in the composer's imagination, it forthwith begins to grow and develop, the principal theme being the center round which the branches group themselves in all conceivable ways, though always unmistakably related to it.\textsuperscript{28}

The composer\textsuperscript{29} thinks in sounds; it is the mental image of a combination of sounds that gives birth to a composition. This sonic image is not frozen, but dynamic, developing, it is a seed out of which "tonally moving forms" sprout in a plant-like growth. The whole process is organic and mental at the same time, confined to the composer's imagination, and this makes us wonder why it is important for Hanslick to call these ideas 'acoustic.' The latter are closely related to the auditory ideas above, but there is a difference, however slight, as well: when he speaks of auditory ideas, Hanslick seems to imply that they are produced by music; acoustic ideas, on the other hand, are placed in the context of creating music.

The four types of meaning we have examined by no means exhaust the subject. The problem of music's meaning and/or musical meaning in Hanslick's doctrine is complex and

\textsuperscript{28}Ibid., p. 52, emphasis added--V. M.

\textsuperscript{29}It is interesting that, unlike e. g. Hegel who regarded music primarily as a listener, Hanslick insists that the composer's point of view must be the one of musical aesthetics. One of the important dimensions of Hanslick's formalism consists in the frequently voiced belief that the aesthetically enlightened listener must experience music in the same "acoustic" way it was created by the composer. And Hanslick did not even notice that, along with objectification (as a result of formalisation), his discussion was thus radically--and Romantically--subjectified.
sometimes enigmatic, deserving further investigation. Before we try to sum up our analysis, however, there is one important aspect of the theory that we need to touch upon. Dahlhaus' view on Hanslick provides a convenient foil for this.

Noting the stress on the merging of form and meaning in Hanslick's doctrine, Dahlhaus does not show sufficient sensitivity to the fact that what emerges from this fusion is strongly slanted toward the sensuous element of form. It is true that, as Dahlhaus observes, Hanslick's 'form' is not purely sensuous yet it is also true that Hanslick wants very much to demonstrate (whether he succeeds or not is a different matter at the moment) that music "has no subject beyond the combinations of notes we hear, for music speaks not only by means of sound, it speaks nothing but sound."\(^{30}\) This very sound, however, is, in a manner reminiscent of the view Hanslick criticises, not merely a natural phenomenon: it has to be artificially produced and thus bears the stamp of intellect's work on it.

Further, other aspects of the sensuous element in Hanslick's theory also produce a mixed impression. On the one hand, the old ways of philosophising about music are accused of insensitivity to it.

The reason why people failed to discover the beauties in which pure music abounds is, in great measure, to be

\(^{30}\)Ibid., p. 119.
found in the underrating by the older systems of aesthetics of the sensuous element and in its subordination to morality and feeling - in Hegel, to the 'idea'.

On the other hand, concentration on the purely sonic matter of music is deemed unworthy of civilised judgment:

To be the slave of unreasoning, undirected, and purposeless feelings, ignited by a power which is out of all relation to our will and intellect, is not worthy of the human mind.

And a few pages later:

It is beyond all question that the action of music was far more direct in the case of ancient races than it is with us, because mankind is much more easily impressed by elemental forces in a primitive state of culture than later on, when intellectual consciousness and the faculty of reflection have attained a higher degree of maturity.

Thus form, which is the "message" of music par excellence, is not purely and only sounds. It is at once ideal and inextricable from them because it is

the architectonic combination of the units and groups of units of which a composition is made up; or more definitely speaking, the symmetry of their successions, their contrasts, repetitions, and general working out. But thus understood, the subject is identical with themes with which this architectonic structure is built up.

Thus, again, Dahlhaus did have a reason to interpret Hanslick's 'form' as designating something ideal; yet his emphasis on its ideality is exaggerated. To close this

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31Ibid., p. 49, emphasis added.
32Ibid., p. 93.
33Ibid., p. 95.
34Ibid., p. 123.
correction of Dahlhaus' argument, where Hanslick's form almost becomes a Neoplatonic essence "shining forth" through crude matter, we only need to quote Hanslick himself: the subject of music must be understood "as the concrete group of sounds in a piece of music"\textsuperscript{35} and "sound in music is the end... the ultimate and absolute object in view."\textsuperscript{36} Hanslick does say that "[i]n music no distinction can be made between substance and form, as it has no form independent of substance"\textsuperscript{37} but the substance here is "the material element, which in all aesthetic enjoyment is at the root of the intellectual one."

Hanslick's argument produces a strong impression of ambiguity, inconclusiveness, and inconsistency. His central idea of the unity of form and content in music can be found in both Hegel's and Schopenhauer's theories and thus is not so much of a philosophical discovery as Hanslick's nervous enthusiasm about it would suggest. This unity was correctly posited by Hanslick but was not conclusively explained in terms of theory. The theses that the sounds of music are all there is to it and that at the same time music is the most ethereal art truly "not of this world" are left without any convincing reconciliation. References to nature's mysterious workings wherein the ultimate explanation is (never?) to be found are a poor excuse.

\textsuperscript{35}Ibid., p. 124.

\textsuperscript{36}Ibid., p. 67.

\textsuperscript{37}Ibid., p. 122.
Even when Hanslick was correctly defining musical form as the dynamic complex of tonal relations he did not quite realize what he was doing, namely, opening the door, if ever so slightly, for the idealism he intended to criticise in the first place. Ideas, the element of thought, do not come packaged neatly in little manageable pieces. They spring from the Heraclitean flow; they are fluid and impregnate everything they touch. Having set out to sweep music clean of the dust of old metaphysics (which he neither knew nor tried to understand), Hanslick did not even notice how, through a little concession to idealism, he, the purifier of 'musical form,' turned the latter into an almost ideal entity, into a play of relations among musical elements, a play that can be truly apprehended only by the intellect. And although the uninvited idealist element in Hanslick's theory should not be exaggerated, at times, when he forgot for a moment his theoretical ambition, he would slip into unguarded idealistic praise of music:

Thoughts and feelings pervade with vital energy the musical organism, the embodiment of beauty and symmetry, and though they are not identical with the organism itself nor yet visible, they are, as it were, its breath of life.\footnote{Ibid., p. 125.}

Supplementing our preliminary summary of Hanslick's theory in the end of the previous section, we can say that his position is torn asunder by two conflicting and unreconciled tendencies: (i) the meaning of music is confined to
architectonic relations of notes; yet at the same time, (ii) these relations express the dynamic properties of emotion.

The positive significance of Hanslick's doctrine, in our opinion, rests on the fact that he quite correctly identified the task of philosophy of music to demarcate as distinctly as possible the boundaries of the musical, to disclose the meaning of music from within the sphere of music itself. We agree with Hanslick that music's mysteries cannot be uncovered by means of psychology, acoustics or some other natural science. And we certainly find that his observation about the fusion of subject and object in music is very perceptive. Concentration on form—although it was not entirely neglected in earlier theories—is certainly another Hanslick's valuable contribution to music aesthetics.

His mistake consisted in seeing the product of this fusion as purely formal, and that was a mere assumption. For there is no reason to give preference to the formal outcome of the merging of subject and object in music over the substantive one: why can't we say, together with, e.g., Schopenhauer, that something substantive, not only formal, emerges from this union? And that it is this substantive element, not mere sound, that gives music the power to affect us so strongly?

Apart from this, what Hanslick's theory does accomplish is to sharpen the focus on the problem of expression. When the thesis is posited that music expresses nothing but itself, the question immediately arises as to what it means to "express"
something; whether something can "express" itself, and if it can, then what the difference is between "expression" and identity with itself; what "expression" can be like if there is nothing which is expressed; and how various modes differ of the relation between the expressing and the expressed. The host of these questions called persistently to be answered. An attempt to answer some of them was made in Suzanne Langer's theory of symbol and its application to music.

Hanslick may not have been the first to discover the unity of subject and object in music but the very concentration of attention on it was extremely valuable. And not only because it is the problem of meaning in music that stands out most prominently in the twentieth-century problematic of musical aesthetics. The importance of Hanslick's contribution consists equally in the fact that in his integrating postulate he expressed the thought whose "presentiments" can be found with many of his predecessors. Thus we find in Hanslick's position a continuity with Hegel and Schopenhauer (which is rather paradoxical given the usual description of him as a formalist) and at the same time a deep positive significance. For nowhere, in our opinion, does the meaning of music which imparts depth and--metaphysical, if you will--importance to it, shows itself with the same power as in its form.
Chapter IV

Form of Feeling

Unlike Eduard Hanslick, Suzanne Langer did not want to bury the questions about music's relation to the world at large in references to nature's mysteries and imponderable secrets nor did she attempt to isolate aesthetics from the broader context of philosophy. After the constrained and intentionally narrow space of Hanslick's theory, we feel as though we were entering a much larger territory as we move into Langer's philosophy of art. The horizons that Hanslick strove to eliminate from musical aesthetics find their way back into the picture, expanding it again to include the most general philosophical topics.

At the same time as this broadening of perspective occurs, there is a further sharpening of focus on what constitutes the central point of Hanslick's discussion, i.e. on the problem of form in which Langer discerns a deep significance and, as a result, what was form for Hanslick turns into a new entity—symbol.

The most remarkable feature of Langer's theory is the fact that she sees symbolism as the central point for all problems related not only to the arts but to distinctively human
activities in general.

In the fundamental notion of symbolization, she writes,--mystical, practical or mathematical, it makes no difference--we have the keynote of all humanistic problems. In it lies a new conception of "mentality" that may illuminate questions of life and consciousness...¹

Based on such a broad understanding of symbolism's role, Langer constructs a theory of mind² that purports to "marry" the accomplishments of modern science and the insights of the idealist philosophy of art which, in her opinion, has done more justice to art, ritual, and myth as important human activities. To bring about such a synthesis one needs to recognize the strong sides and shortcomings of both traditions.

The advantage of the idealist way of thinking about art, according to Langer, consists in treating the above areas of creative endeavour as peculiarly human, deeply meaningful, and serious.³ The shortcoming of the theories of art based on idealistic premises is that they all find it necessary to rely on some kind of "ultimate being," something "transcendental."

¹Philosophy in a New Key, p. 25.

²"Modern theory of knowledge," she wrote in 1951, "leading naturally to a critique of science, represents the best philosophical work of our time. But 'knowledge' is not synonymous with 'human mentality.' It is the intent of this book to establish a theory of mind which shall support that excellent treatment of science, and furthermore lead to an equally serious and detailed critique of art" (ibid., p. ix).

³See e. g. summary remarks to this effect in the "Preface to the First Edition," ibid., pp. xiii-xiv.
The advantages and shortcomings of the scientific-empirical approach are the mirror-image of those of idealist philosophy: science confines its interests to the realm of "fact" and rationality but does not, and maybe cannot because of its own "positivist metaphysics," treat art seriously, reducing it instead to purely animal functions.

Faced with this dilemma and wishing to find the ground where these two views can be reconciled, Langer embraces, on the one hand, the naturalistic belief that man is an entirely "natural" being, i. e. one without any supernatural "connections."

That man is an animal I certainly believe, she says, and also, that he has no supernatural essence, "soul" or "entelechy" or "mind-stuff," enclosed in his skin. He is an organism, his substance is chemical, and what he does, suffers, or knows, is just what this sort of chemical structure may do, suffer, or know.⁴

On the other hand, she proclaims that this natural being has a (natural) need that presumably cannot be reduced to mere animal needs and impulses. The recognition of this need takes the form of what Langer herself admits to be "a mere declaration of faith":

there is a primary need in man, which other creatures probably do not have, and which actuates all his apparently unzoological aims...⁵

The newly discovered basic need is that of symbolisation:

⁴Ibid., p. 40.

⁵Ibid., p. 40.
The symbol-making function is one of man's primary activities, like eating, looking, or moving about.\(^6\)

This revision of the "inventory of human needs" constitutes the pivotal point in Langer's doctrine, and many of the latter's strong and weak points spring from this crucial precept.

To try and describe here Langer's theory in its entirety would be a hopeless undertaking because of its elaborate and ramified nature.\(^7\) It is based, as we said above, on postulating a new natural need in the *homo sapiens*; on this foundation it builds a symbolist theory of mind; it incorporates a naturalistic-symbolist epistemology that bears a distinctive stamp of Kant's and especially Cassirer's influences; it puts forth a relational theory of meaning; it involves a rather unconventional treatment of emotive life; and finally--although our list can be made much longer--all this is an extended set of premises for a comprehensive theory of art.

The overall thrust of her doctrine is summarised in the quotation below, representing almost all of its major themes:

\(^{6}\)Ibid., p. 41.

The general theory of symbolism here set forth, writes Langer, which distinguishes between two symbolic modes rather than restricting intelligence to discursive forms and relegating all other conception to some irrational realm of feeling and instinct has the great advantage of assimilating all mental activity to reason, instead of grafting that strange product upon a fundamentally unintellectual organism. It accounts for imagination and dream, myth and ritual, as well as for practical intelligence. Discursive thought gives rise to science, and a theory of knowledge restricted to its products culminates in the critique of science; but the recognition of non-discursive thought makes it just as possible to construct a theory of understanding that naturally culminates in a critique of art. The parent stock of both conceptual types, of verbal and non-verbal formulation, is the basic human act of symbolic transformation. The root is the same, only the flower is different.⁸

"Symbolic transformation" is thus at the root of all intelligence, the first awakening of reason which then splits into two modes: discursive and nondiscursive. Together with dream, myth, and ritual, the arts belong to the realm of the latter. Their meaning (Langer would suggest the term 'import' for it) is nondiscursive but is still "assimilated" to reason.

Symbol, according to Langer, is "any device whereby we are enabled to make an abstraction."⁹ Symbol's most characteristic trait is that it is capable of representing objects to our thought as concepts, i.e., in contrast to sign or signal which directly point to their objects, it enables us to refer to an object in absentia, "which is called 'thinking of' or

⁸Ibid., p. 143.
⁹Feeling and Form, p. xi.
'referring to' what is not here'\textsuperscript{10}. A symbol gives something "clearly and objectively for contemplation"; or, in other words, its function is the "articulation and presentation of concepts."\textsuperscript{11} Hence much of Langer's emphasis falls on the articulate character of symbols. Articulateness is important because, through it, relations among the parts of a symbol become apparent.

A complex symbol such as a sentence or a map (whose outlines correspond formally to the vastly greater outlines of a country), or a graph (analogous, perhaps, to invisible conditions, the rise and fall of prices, the progress of an epidemic) is an articulate form. Its characteristic symbolic function is what I call logical expression. It expresses relations; and it may "mean"--connote or denote--any complex of elements that is of the same articulate form as the symbol, the form which the symbol "expresses."\textsuperscript{12}

The complex of a symbol's elements, their mutual interplay and interaction thus constitute its meaning. This interaction of the elements, their respective situation to one another (Langer also uses the term 'function' for it), and the pattern of their mutual relations play the central role in Langer's theory of meaning.

There is in fact no quality of meaning; its essence lies in the realm of logic, where one does not deal with qualities, but only with relations. It is not fair to say: "Meaning is a relation," for that suggests too simple a business. Most people think of a relation as a

\textsuperscript{10}Philosophy in a New Key, p. 31. Cf. also: "A signal is comprehended or it serves to make us notice the object or situation it bespeaks. A symbol is understood when we conceive the idea it presents" (Feeling and Form, p. 26).

\textsuperscript{11}Feeling and Form, p. 26.

\textsuperscript{12}Feeling and Form, pp. 30-1.
two-termed affair—"A-in-relation-to-B"; but meaning involves several terms, and different types of meaning consist of different types and degrees of relationship. It is better, perhaps, to say: "Meaning is not a quality, but a function of a term." A function is a pattern viewed with reference to one special term round which it centers; this pattern emerges when we look at the given term in its total relation to the other terms about it.\textsuperscript{13}

How does music figure in this view of symbolism? As we see from a quotation above, there are two main symbolic modes for Langer—discursive and nondiscursive. The former is best represented by language with its fixed denotations and connotations, i.e. stable referential links between words and objects or conceptions they symbolize. Music is just the opposite of language, regarding stable reference, and is the most vivid representative of nondiscursive, i.e., presentational symbolic modes with no "conventional reference."\textsuperscript{14}

It is very important for Langer's theory of art to insist that discursive forms of expression do not cover the whole area of semantics, that nondiscursive, presentational forms are also rich in content and significance. She strongly believes that "the field of semantics is wider than that of language."\textsuperscript{15} At the same time, she argues that discursive thought does not exhaust the entire domain of reason. Intelligence can be found at work long before its products

\textsuperscript{13}Philosophy in a New Key, p. 55 (emphasis in text).

\textsuperscript{14}See e. g. Feeling and Form, p. 32.

\textsuperscript{15}Ibid., p. 87.
acquire the form of a verbal utterance, i.e. even sense-perception is imbued with first abstractive-symbolising patterns of reason. "All sensitivity," states Langer, "bears the stamp of mentality."\(^{16}\)

Language thus encompasses only part of our experience, leaving the other part to presentational symbolic modes. This other, nonlinguistic, unverbalisable, or "unspeakable," experience is precisely what Langer regards as the domain of 'feeling.' Langer understands feeling "in its widest possible sense," that is, as "anything that may be felt."\(^{17}\)

In this sense it includes both sensation and emotion—the felt responses of our sense organs to the environment, of our proprioceptive mechanisms to internal changes, and of the organism as a whole to its situation as a whole, the so-called 'emotive feelings.'\(^{18}\)

It is with the pattern of this common area of sensation and emotion that music shows similarity which makes it "a tonal analogue of emotive life."

The tonal structures we call 'music' bear close logical similarity to the forms of human feeling—forms of growth and of attenuation, flowing and stowing, conflict and resolution, speed, arrest, terrific excitement, calm, or

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\(^{16}\) *Philosophy in a New Key*, p. 90. Also cf.: "A tendency to organize the sensory field into groups and patterns of sense-data, to perceive forms rather than a flux of light-impressions, seems to be inherent in our receptor apparatus... the conditions for rationality lie deep in our pure animal experience—in our power of perceiving, in the elementary functions of our eyes and ears and fingers. Mental life begins with our mere physiological constitution." Ibid., p. 89 (emphasis added—V. M.).


\(^{18}\) Ibid.
subtle activation and dreamy lapses—not joy and sorrow perhaps, but the poignancy of either and both—the greatness and brevity and eternal passing of everything vitally felt. Such is the pattern, or logical form, of sentience; and the pattern of music is that same form worked out in pure, measured sound and silence.  

As a symbol, music can express the life of sentience thanks to the fact that musical form is structured, consists of mutually related elements, in short, it is "an articulate form."

Its parts not only fuse together to yield a greater entity, but in so doing they maintain some degree of separate existence, and the sensuous character of each element is affected by its function in the complex whole. This means that the greater entity we call a composition is not merely produced by mixture... but is articulated, i. e. its internal structure is given to our perception.

Formal characteristics of music are thus viewed as its expressive elements, constituting what Langer calls 'logical expression.' Musical form is, consequently, the immediate bearer of meaning.

From these building blocks a definition of music is eventually constructed:

[M]usic is "significant form," and its significance is that of a symbol, a highly articulated sensuous object, which by virtue of its dynamic structure can express the forms of vital experience which language is peculiarly unfit to convey. Feeling, life, motion and emotion constitute its import.

Further, what music expresses is a special modification of

19 Feeling and Form, p. 27.
20 Ibid., p. 31.
21 Feeling and Form, p. 32.
meaning as we normally refer to it. Linguistic meaning—which is our normal paradigm of meaning—is a higher, "consummated" kind of meaning because it has fixed references. To distinguish musical from linguistic meaning, Langer introduces a new term for it: 'import':

Music has import, and this import is the pattern of sentience—the pattern of life itself, as it is felt and directly known. Let us therefore call the significance of music its "vital import" instead of "meaning," using "vital" not as a vague laudatory term, but as a qualifying adjective restricting the relevance of "import" to the dynamism of subjective experience.22

An important dimension of this felt experience is time. Due to its unique aesthetic characteristics, music is especially suited to be "the image of time." It is a tonal symbol that "makes time audible, and its form and continuity sensible."23 By 'time' Langer does not mean the same thing that, for instance, science normally operates with—mechanically measured, uniform temporal units. It is rather the subjective experience of time, time perceived as a flow of "logical patterns," virtual time.

Musical duration is an image of what might be termed 'lived' or 'experienced' time, Langer writes,—the passage of life that we feel as expectations become 'now,' and 'now' turns into unalterable fact. Such passage is measurable only in terms of sensibilities, tensions, and emotions; and it has not merely a different measure, but altogether different structure from

22Feeling and Form, pp. 31-2.

23Ibid., p. 110.
practical or scientific time. The semblance of this vital, experiential time is the primary illusion of music. All music creates an order of virtual time...\textsuperscript{24}

If we attempted to summarize the whole picture in a few words, with a special view to highlight the place of music in it, we would probably say something like the following.

Man is a natural being (as contrasted with somebody having an immortal soul or some other link with supernatural life). Abstractive symbolisation, which is the source of intelligence, originally began in a spontaneous and, again, natural way. Our \textit{entire} experience is informed by our mental operations or intelligence. Verbal (discursive) expression is only one way of dealing with experience. There is no such thing as "the world"; what we have is a string of questions we ask about our experience. The picture of the world that we construct is pre-formed by the framework set by these questions.

In the course of its development the symbolising activity of mind divides itself into two distinct modes: discursive (e.g., natural language) and nondiscursive (e.g., art). Art creates an illusion that repeats (reflects, expresses, makes sensibly perceptible, etc.) the logical pattern of experience obtained through and by \textit{sentience} (as contrasted with discursive intelligence). Music is, due to the peculiar nature of sound (as an easily negotiable sensuous medium), best suited to express this emotive life, motion, and "felt" time.

\textsuperscript{24}Ibid., p. 109.
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The above is, of course, only a cursory outline of Langer's theory. We hope that our analysis below, dealing with her direct or indirect "dialogue" with the three predecessors, will do more justice to the theory's depth and complexity. At the same time we hope that our treatment of Langer with a view to the three previous discussions of music by Hegel, Schopenhauer, and Hanslick will allow us to establish the points in which Langer's ideas on the meaning of music differ from those of the above authors and, more importantly, those in which her views display a substantial degree of continuity with them.

As far as Hegel is concerned, perhaps the first thing that would strike the reader of her books is that she entirely ignores him—both his philosophy in general and aesthetics in particular. Given the astonishing number of sources and authors she refers to in her writings, the fact that Hegel is not mentioned even once, not even to be refuted, is a remarkable omission in itself. One possible reason for this is that her main philosophical inspiration comes from Kant and neo-Kantianism, first and foremost from Ernst Cassirer to whom the *Feeling and Form* is dedicated. In this lineage, Hegel is "passed by" in favour of pre- and post-Hegelian but strictly non-Hegelian modes of thought. Instead of further speculating, however, about the possible reasons for this we would rather
draw a number of comparisons between the two philosophies of music.

The first thing that we need to point out is that aspect of Langer's doctrine with which we began our discussion in this chapter, i.e., the fact that she examines music against a broad philosophical background. Just as it was in Hegel's and Schopenhauer's cases, music is placed in the context of a comprehensive worldview embracing metaphysical, epistemological, and historical perspectives. The fact that these perspectives in Langer's picture of the world do not coincide, and in fact very frequently clash, with Hegel's views does not prevent, nevertheless, the two systems from coming rather close to each other in certain points—especially where the "message" conveyed by music is concerned.

One of such points is the understanding shared by both philosophers that art's primary function is to negotiate ideas. Langer's terminology may be slightly different in the sense that even when she uses, e.g., the same terms as Hegel she interprets them in a different fashion. 'Concept' is one such term the interpretation of which differs significantly with the two philosophers, and the difference in terminology reflects larger disparities of overall philosophical positions. Langer's definition of concept as that which is shared by "all adequate conceptions of an object"\(^{25}\) is far removed indeed from Hegel's treatment of it as a complex and

\(^{25}\)See quotation on p. 6 above.
dynamic unity of mutually necessary opposites that we analyzed above in Chapter I.

And yet when Langer says that symbol's primary function is the expression of concepts she comes very close to Hegel's understanding of the nature of art. As we remember from the beginning of our discussion, Hegel believed that art is supposed to embody the Idea of Beauty, and the latter, in turn, is a peculiar facet of the Concept. The possible objection that Langer understands 'concept' in a way different from Hegel's must be subjected to closer scrutiny that, interestingly enough, reveals further similarities between the two views.

First, Hegel would certainly have little, if any, desire to quarrel with Langer's dictum that all reality, as far as it is accessible to our reason, is imbued with intelligence. His argument would go further, of course, to point out that all reality is the result of the unrelenting activity of Concept—a view which Langer is highly unlikely to endorse without great reservations, if at all, given her unwillingness to admit anything "transcendental" into her worldview. Yet at least in the area circumscribed by human intelligence, and especially of artistic activity, their views are strikingly similar.  

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26That is, once again, if we keep Hegel's objective idealism strictly out of the picture. As a neo-Kantian, Langer tacitly refused to commit herself to either recognising or rejecting any reality beyond the subject's experience (the same lacuna as found, for instance, in Nelson Goodman's
Second, if we look at the particular character of what kind of concept music, according to both Hegel and Langer, is capable of expressing we shall see that their views show further affinity. Because, surely, Langer’s two major postulates—that (a) music expresses (has as its import) emotive life; and that (b) all of our experience, including the domain of feeling, is infused with various degrees of the presence of intelligence—when combined produce an argument very similar to Hegel’s. If feeling is a certain aspect of intelligence, then music, which expresses the life of feeling, conveys this aspect of intelligence present in life. Or in other words, music expresses concept/intelligence modified as feeling.

Another important similarity lies in the fact that for both Hegel and Langer the musical meaning does not contain a reference to any particular object: in Hegel’s terms, it is "object-free" and, in Langer’s, "nondiscursive," i.e., lacking a fixed reference to an object. Here, again, we need to discriminate between the different trajectories of thought that have led to the same result. Namely, Hegel establishes the object-free character of music’s meaning as a result of the fact that the content of music is the one-sided subjectivity of the spirit. Langer’s point of departure is language and its characteristic way of conveying a meaning,

Languages of Art). The similarity we are speaking about here is thus confined to a very narrow aspect of the two theories.
where denotation plays the most important role. Since music conveys "no scene, no object, no fact," it does not possess the necessary means for denotation and thus falls under the category of nondiscursive symbolization. In the preceding three chapters enough has been said about the object-free nature of music's meaning to make it obvious that, by stressing the lack of conventional reference in music, Langer is saying essentially the same thing as Hegel, Schopenhauer, and Hanslick.

In contrast to Hegel, Schopenhauer is given some attention in Langer's writings and, significantly for our discussion, precisely in the context of the issue at hand, the meaning of music. In fact, Langer appears to view him as an important precursor of her own views, or perhaps we could say that she sees herself picking up where Schopenhauer left off.

The assumption that music is a kind of language, not of the here-and-now, but of genuine conceptual content, is widely entertained, though perhaps not as universally as the motive-symptom theory. The best-known pioneer in this field is Schopenhauer; and it has become something of an accepted verdict that his attempt to interpret music as a symbol for the irrational aspect of mental life, the Will, was a good venture, though of course his conclusion, being "metaphysical," was quite bad. However that may be, his novel contribution to the present issue was certainly his treatment of music as an impersonal, negotiable, real semantic, a symbolism with a content of ideas, instead of an overt sign of somebody's emotional condition. 28

Langer's alliance with Schopenhauer in this matter is fully

27Philosophy in a New Key, p. 209.

28Philosophy in a New Key, p. 219.
justified because their respective arguments are indeed parallel to each other. Schopenhauer called music "in the highest degree a universal language"; this language presents the essence of the world as "universalia ante rem" (we can translate this expression in this context perhaps as "the universal aspect of things before they become objects") as opposed to language proper that gives us "universalia post rem," concepts of things as (external) objects. Needless to say, this paradigm fits well into Langer's model of discursive and nondiscursive symbolisms where linguistic meaning points to the objective world while music's import revolves within the sphere of subjective experience. Furthermore, music in Schopenhauer's view is an objectification of will; correspondingly, Langer considers the relations of elements in a musical composition--that disclose and present for contemplation music's import--as something fully objective, objectively given in music.

In addition to this, Langer shares another interesting view with Schopenhauer, i.e., the view about the illusory nature of music. The "illusionary" aspect of musical import is a prominent dimension of Langer's doctrine. The proposition, for instance, that music is "the tonal analogue of felt time" does not mean, according to Langer, that it is actually the composer's "felt time" that is somehow contained in a piece. The felt time in music is a semblance of the subjective temporal experience, that is, the illusion of time. The only
thing it has in common with the real temporal experience is its "logical pattern." In Schopenhauer's idiom, 'illusion' turns into 'idea' and 'picture':

Thus we see here [in music--V. M.] the movements of the will transferred to the province of the mere idea, which is the exclusive scene of the achievements of the fine arts, for they absolutely demand that the will itself shall not interfere, and that we shall conduct ourselves as pure knowing subjects. Therefore the affections of the will itself, thus actual pain and actual pleasure must not be excited, but only their substitutes, that which is agreeable to the intellect, as a picture of the satisfaction of the will, and that which is more or less repugnant to it, as a picture of greater or less pain.25

For both Langer and Schopenhauer, the meaning of music is a "spirit world without matter" in more than one sense: not only this meaning, or import, is devoid of all objective reference, does not point to any object in the world. Apart from this, its relation to the reality of our inner life, i. e., its ontological status, is that of an illusion, something intended for pure contemplation, not participation. The point about contemplation brings us to one more important affinity between the two philosophers: their shared cognitive view of art.

Art, for Langer, is primarily a cognitive activity; understanding is what it serves. In the Feeling and Form she enthusiastically quotes Otto Baensch who says that "[a]rt, just like science, aims primarily to be 'understood'."30 The part of our experience which is forever resisting science's objective attitude--our subjective, emotive, our inner life--

is open to art's penetrating insight and displaying power. And it is the primary goal of art to present in sensuous forms, for our understanding, that aspect of our mental life which eludes the fetters of concepts and yet shares common ground, logical patterns, with them: sentience. Schopenhauer's cognitive-artistic theory may be more (Romantically) extravagant when he says that knowledge is the path of deliverance from the grip of the world will but at the same time is not entirely unlike Langer's when he exalts artistic knowledge and calls music "the true philosophy" superior to those expounded in concepts. The point here, of course, is not whether artistic knowledge is superior to scientific---Langer obviously does not hold such a view---but whether music provides any knowledge at all. And both Langer and Schopenhauer believe that it does, although it is a special (nondiscursive and untranslatable, respectively) kind of knowledge, less accessible to conceptual terms.

Incidentally, with Schopenhauer Langer shares not only insights but also problems, one of which comes as a result of her fundamental tenet: symbolisation is a product of natural evolution of man. Because of this principle, in which the natural man is a "chemical structure," symbolisation appears to be a spontaneously generated act ('spontaneous' is the favourite term of all naturalistically inclined doctrines). Somehow, the "chemical structure" manages to beget a child who is no longer so purely chemical, something appears out of
nothing, there is an effect (abstractive symolisation) without a cause. It is almost the same breakdown in the chain of generation that we found in Schopenhauer's notion of objectification of will: the most crucial phase in the generative process remains unexplained. Like Schopenhauer, Langer is fully aware of the gap in her account of symbolisation's origins: she calls her discovery of man's natural need to symbolise a "mere declaration of faith." As we pointed out in Chapter II, Schopenhauer too despaired of an explanation and simply postulated music's relation to will.

The cognitive aspect of music, on the other hand, is what rather sharply distinguishes Langer's theory from Hanslick's. In the Philosophy in a New Key she refutes Hanslick's basic precept that representation must necessarily involve a definite conception of the represented object. Hanslick's postulate, she says,

> applies generally to literal, especially to scientific, expression; but it is not true of some other modes, which serve rather to formulate knowledge than to communicate its finished products.\(^\text{31}\)

Hanslick was right, Langer believes, to argue against understanding the link between music and emotion too directly and uncritically but he threw the baby out with the water: sharing logical patterns with emotions and events does warrant recognition of meaning in music, provided we are able to differentiate between various modes of knowledge we can

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\(^{31}\text{Op. cit., p. 225.}\)
possess.

At the same time, Langer accepts Hanslick's famous definition of music, although laying her own stresses in interpreting it.

... [T]he elements of music are not tones of such and such pitch, duration and loudness, nor chords and measured beats; they are, like all artistic elements, something virtual, created only for perception. Eduard Hanslick denoted them rightly: "tönen bewegte Formen"—"sounding forms in motion." Such motion is the essence of music; a motion of forms that are not visible, but are given to the ear instead of the eye.  

From the discussion of Langer's theory of symbol earlier in this chapter it should be clear how important the form of music must be for its meaning. It is through the formal relations and interactions that the logical patterns, constituting the import of a composition, are revealed. In her own way, Langer presents a theory of significance in music that can be said to have one of Hanslick's most fortunate insights as its foundation: in music we find a fusion form and meaning. Langer herself does not put much emphasis on this fusion; by the time she put forth her theory the very notion of meaning in music had been largely compromised—not in the least through the effort of Hanslick and his followers. Her main purpose—and achievement, we might say—was to restore in a new setting the view that allows to discern in music something infinitely greater than merely a play of tonal forms, a vast expanse of a peculiar mental experience we all

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32 Feeling and Form, p. 107.
objectively share despite its purely subjective nature. Yet
the very focus on the form of music and penetrating analysis
of how it is capable of delivering such a profound "message"
may be regarded as a continuation of an important, albeit far
from formalistic, theme in Hanslick's doctrine.

Summing up our comparison between Langer and the three
previous authors, we can state that she definitely shares
common ground with them in many important and interesting
ways—even when she herself might not have realized this. With
Hegel and Schopenhauer she shares (i) the comprehensive and
systematic character of philosophical approach, attempting to
provide consistent answers to fundamental questions of musical
expression. Further, she shares with them the view that (ii)
music expresses ideas modified as the life of feeling in the
broadest sense, and with Hegel the understanding that (iii)
the sphere of emotion is not isolated from conceptual thinking
but rather derives from a common source with it, and that both
belong to the domain of intelligence. In addition to this,
Langer continues the theme expounded by all the three authors
about the (iv) object-free character of meaning in music. She
endorses, echoing Schopenhauer, (v) the cognitive value of
music's import. And last but not least, her theory once again
draws our attention to and sharpens the focus on (vi) the
unity of form and content in music.

We would like to close this chapter with a brief quotation
from Langer's Philosophy in a New Key, the first book in which
she presented her theory of symbolism. In this early quotation, several important themes that we attempted to analyse above have found expression: the insistence that music does have a meaning, that this meaning is unique and insightful, that it is dynamic and rich but at the same time detached from what it reflects.

Music is revealing where words are obscuring, because it can have not only a content, but a transient play of contents. It can articulate feelings without becoming wedded to them.\textsuperscript{33}

\textsuperscript{33}\textit{Philosophy in a New Key}, p. 243-4.
Chapter V
Conclusions

1.
In the course of our investigation, we have repeatedly summed up various similarities and differences in the views of the four authors that are the subject of this study. It is therefore hardly necessary to reiterate all of those points here—a brief recapitulation of the most salient ones should suffice.

1. All of the four authors we have discussed agree on what some of them call the object-free character of meaning in music. For Hegel, musical expression is such that it contains no "trace" of particular objects in the external world, it is confined exclusively to the internal sphere of subjective life. Despite seeing in it numerous and far-reaching parallelisms and analogies with the world, Schopenhauer regards this attribute of music as the most significant proof of its proximity to will. Hanslick sees it as evidence of the absence of meaning—music's inability to represent objects as distinctly as the other arts do inspires him to deny almost all extramusical meaning in it altogether. The frame of Langer's discussion is set by linguistics: for her, this characteristic of musical expression is best defined through
a contrast with language, i.e., the object-free nature of musical meaning is the result of the fact that, unlike language, musical symbolism does not have a fixed reference.

2. The lack of fixity, stability, and constancy in musical expression, i.e., its dynamic character is the second aspect of music's meaning on which the four authors show full agreement. For Hegel and Schopenhauer, this permanent motion within music corresponds to the activity of the two respective world-forming principles: the Concept and the Will. For Hanslick, the dynamism of music is reflective of the formal aspect of human emotion. The connection is unwillingly admitted into musical meaning, while the dynamics of form is considered central to it. Langer, on the contrary, makes the dynamics of emotion the focal point of her theory and, instead of half-dismissing it, views it as "the other" of the content of language. This other mode of meaning embraces a large sphere of experience without which our understanding of the world and ourselves would be irreparably crippled.

3. The third point on which the four theories seem to converge is that music represents a complete fusion of content and form. The recognition of this quality in music evokes largely different reactions from the four philosophers. Acknowledging the formal character of musical beauty, Hegel seems to suggest that music's status as a fine art is ensured through its connection with text, word, and, ultimately, Concept. Schopenhauer views the disappearing boundary between
content and form in music as evidence of will's ineffability and thus as further proof in support of his theory. For Hanslick, this is perhaps the most exhilarating fact about music, serving as the basis for his negative formalist thesis. Langer's theory of symbolism also benefits from, and in fact heavily leans on, the unity of form and content in music: the "invisible" and unverbalisable content of the "other" experience is given to perception through the logic of symbol's internal relations.

4. And finally, all of the above authors believe that music expresses feeling—with Hanslick's position requiring certain qualifications that we have provided in Chapter III. Naturally enough, to each of them, 'feeling' represents something different. Hegel's 'feeling' is a specific facet of the Absolute Spirit. Subjectivity is a necessary principle in the entire world-structure, determining, together with its opposite, the world's development from the lowest to the highest forms of existence. It is at once distinct and inseparable from the objective aspect of the Concept. It is the "genetrix" of things in Hegel's world: something usually comes to be first in a latent, undisclosed form, and is then, through a process of mediation, brought into objective existence.

It is with Hegel's 'subjectivity' that Schopenhauer's 'will' shows most affinity, as we explained in Chapter II. It is omnipresent, a universal principle of existence, but it is
also impenetrable and transcendent, inaccessible to the power of reason. For Hegel, subjectivity is transformed into objectivity as a natural and necessary process within the all-embracing sphere of Reason. For Schopenhauer, on the contrary, the World Will is never fully objectified and, in fact, it is not clear how it even begins to objectify itself in the first place. These two views are deeply connected but at the same time as deeply divided. Yet we cannot help seeing that the reality they describing, the universal sphere of feeling, is essentially the same.

The formal aspect of emotion that Hanslick recognises in music, again, bears much similarity to both Hegel's 'subjectivity' and Schopenhauer's 'will'--with the enormously significant difference that its metaphysical implications are virtually nil. Music is suspended in an empty space, its environment is blurred (perhaps because we are looking too closely at it), and, as a result, it is said to have no demonstrable connection with this environment.

Langer reestablishes the link between music and feeling within the context of her own symbolist theory of art. Music's expressiveness acquires again the universal character of the older doctrines, and its message, at once illusory and cognitively powerful, discloses the vibrancy of the symbol-world.

Thus all the four authors view the meaning of music as something intimately related to our innermost experiences, as
a special modification of our inner life. With Hegel, Schopenhauer, and Langer this is a consistently and explicitly pursued line of their arguments, while in Hanslick's case the recognition of the connection between music and our mental life is more of a tribute to the greatness of the art than an integral part of his doctrine.

2.

There are at least two rather unexpected conclusions that our work on the above authors has led us to. First of all, a closer look at Hegel and Schopenhauer reveals unexpected rifts in the usual "rationalist-vs.-irrationalist" cliche. Schopenhauer's and Hegel's positions on musical meaning turn out to come surprisingly close. As we have shown in Chapter II¹, the conceptions of will and subjectivity as the content of musical expression represent two different attempts to grasp one subject matter.²

The other interesting conclusion is that Hanslick's solution to the problem of meaning in music is so dependent on the intellectual heritage comprising both Hegel and Schopenhauer--despite his vigorous attempts to dissociate himself from that tradition. Perhaps we could also mention here that certain important aspects of Langer's anti-

¹Pp. 41-2.

²We might add here that the stock of this subject matter was provided, in both cases, primarily by the German romantic understanding of music.
formalism, as far as we have been able to understand it, appears to originate in both Hanslick and Schopenhauer, although they are an unlikely combination given Hanslick's tireless campaign against Richard Wagner, one of Schopenhauer's ardent admirers and followers.

We hope that our analysis has been sufficiently penetrating and balanced. At the same time, however, we fully realise that the subject matter is far from exhausted and calls for further study. The four authors' dialogue spans, roughly, the time from the early nineteenth to middle twentieth centuries. Within this period the art of music has undergone serious stylistic and overall aesthetic changes. One of the lessons of our investigation is that the meaning of music cannot be viewed in entire separation from the larger context in which it is placed. The comparison of various theories of musical meaning is thus, at least partially, a comparison of the more general doctrines they are part of. And conversely, the meaning of music is a function of a certain broader aesthetic or world outlook. The history of the issue is a succession of changing perceptions of music and its role in the world. The question, of course, is whether there is anything that is shared by these views and survives change. If we are able to extract this residue from what are often mutually canceling theories, then perhaps we can be one step closer to having a clearer understanding of what the meaning of music is within the context of our own time which is, whether we like it or
not, the heir to previous history.

We conclude this study in the hope that it makes a modest contribution to this process and will serve as a basis for further exploration of the issues it has allowed us to approach.


