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Ch. 18 - In Defense of the Work of Art: I and Thou in Music Education

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Section IV – A Passage to Elsewhere

Chapter 18

In Defense of the Work of Art: I and Thou in Music Education

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Abstract

A change has been going on in both the philosophy of music education and the general philosophy of music during the last decades: a transition from a focus on music as an object or work to a focus on music as an activity and process. This certainly contrasts with the historical hegemony of the (Western) idea of music as objects. As a philosophical development this is unproblematic. However, a fundamental prerequisite for moving encounters between the human subject and music, in music education as well as in general, is the very idea of music as a work of art. This does not mean that music is to be considered solely as an object. The musical work of art is to be considered as both a subject and an object: a *part-person-part-thing*. In this chapter such ideas are discussed related to writings by Bohlman, Elliott and Small, romanticism, Benjamin's *aura* concept, Buber's *encounter* concept, and Aristotle's discussion of *happiness*.

To Have or Not to Have Moving Experiences Encountering Great Masterpieces of the Past

Professor Andersen is the main character in a novel called *Professor Andersen's Night* by the Norwegian author Dag Solstad. As professor of literature at the University of Oslo and an expert on

Henrik Ibsen, it is a bit surprising that Andersen expresses a fundamental doubt as to whether it is possible for us today to have moving experiences reading the great masterpieces of the past. With sorrow, Professor Andersen announces that he, concerning the idea of such possibilities, has now realized "that this was something humanity had invented in order to endure its own inadequacy":¹

True enough, for 2,500 years it had been necessary to maintain this illusion that human beings were creatures who allowed their inner selves to be stirred and moved by certain portrayals of the human condition, because although the ability was lacking both to create and comprehend such heights and depths in the understanding of human behavior in order to understand their purpose here on earth, so there had been a yearning for this to be possible, but now it isn't there.²

Professor Andersen's reflection is an expression of a quite well known attitude today: skepticism in relation to the belief in existential encounters with the "great works of art", especially if these works of art can be said to have their origins in the past.

This is not a new attitude, however. In the novel *The Devils* (also called *The Possessed* or *Demons*) by Fyodor M. Dostoevsky,³ the character Varvara Petrovna (who would like to take a position like the young nihilists) argues that nobody today is excited about the Sistine Madonna; nobody is spending time on it, except some grumpy old persons.

So, what about old works of art in the music education of today? In her book *Transforming Music Education*, Estelle Jorgensen very clearly formulates this:

The Western classical music tradition has come under close scrutiny and criticism for its historical association with the upper classes or society

establishment, its role taken to be symbolic of upper-class or establishment values and an agent through which the lower or economically and politically disadvantaged classes are oppressed. Its repertoire has been viewed as obsolete, sexist, racist, ethnocentric, and anachronistic; its performance venues regarded as sonic museums where people come to gaze with their ears; and its values largely ignored or rejected by the public at large. . . . And its Western roots have been seen as too limited and limiting, and criticized by music educators and others for constituting too restrictive a view of music in a multicultural society.⁴

Critique of the Hegemony of Western Classical Music In Music Education

In my Scandinavian context, Western classical music has certainly historically been *the* music in general music education and instrumental education at all levels. The Norwegian curriculum for general education from 1960, for example, distinguishes "good music" from "worthless ding-dong." "Good music" is pieces of Western classical music and Norwegian folk music; the "worthless ding-dong" is everything else, such as, for example, popular music.⁵ However, since the 1970s, this hegemony has been challenged. Today popular music is very well represented in

Scandinavian classrooms.⁶ This has to be seen in relation to discussions on cultural hegemony and processes of marginalization of different musical genres in society, including music education.⁷

What is hegemonic culture and what is not—in educational systems as well as in research, media, and societies at large—is truly changing over time. While Western classical music was hegemonic in Scandinavian music education and musicological research until the 1970s, the situation is certainly very different in 2020. In fact, today more people than just right-wing, populist “defenders of Western culture” worry about what some even dare to call the marginalization of Western classical music in general music education.⁸

This situation can be seen in light of how, during the last few decades, a change has been going on in both the philosophy of music education and the general philosophy of music: a transition from a focus on music as an object or work to a focus on music as an activity and process. This certainly contrasts with the historical hegemony of the (Western) idea of music as objects.⁹

As a philosophical development this is quite unproblematic. However, a fundamental prerequisite for moving encounters between the human subject and music is the very idea of music as a work of art. This does not mean that music is to be considered solely as objects. Rather, I argue that the musical work of art is to be considered as both a subject and an object: a *part-person-part-thing* (as a unity).

The Critique of the Idea of Music as Objects

Philip V. Bohlman claims that the “metaphysical condition of music with which we in the West are most familiar is that music is an *object*.”¹⁰ By raising and discussing a number of dichotomies like “die Musik/Musics,” “The Voice of God/The Struggle of the Everyday,” and “Vom musikalischen Schönen/On the Unremarkable in Music,” Bohlman—even using some German terms to underline his points—makes his critique of the traditional Western “metaphysical condition of music” very clear.

Bohlman’s text is related to what is labeled *New musicology*. The most important consequence of New musicology has undoubtedly been the debate on what is actually meant by the term music and the renewed interest in music’s function for individuals and society at large. Furthermore, it embodies a view of music as an activity and process and not solely as a composition or product—a realization that has proved crucial to music education philosophy and practice.

The emphasis on music as an activity and process—a natural, social activity in which participation is central—is not least addressed by Christopher Small: “Music is not a thing at all but an activity, something people do.”¹¹ According to Small, Western scholars of music “have quietly carried out a process of elision by means of which the word *music* becomes equated with ‘works of music in the Western tradition.’”¹² By

taking the concept of music in the direction of *musicking*, however, Small's wish is to underline the fact that music is to participate in a musical performance, be it as a performer, listener, practitioner, composer, or dancer; the main point being that musicking, through the social construction of meaning, becomes a ritual in which all participants explore and celebrate relationships that constitute their social identity. All musicking is to be regarded as a process in which we tell ourselves stories about our relationships and ourselves.

In his critique of concepts like *aesthetic*, *aesthetics*, and *aesthetic education*,¹³ David Elliott argues that the aesthetic concept rests on four basic assumptions, one of these being that music is objects or works.¹⁴ Elliott argues that the term *musical work* is closely related to classical instrumental music of nineteenth-century Europe and that the work concept is one component of the aesthetic concept of music as a product-centered art.¹⁵ Bohlman, Small, and Elliott then must all be said to have a highly critical attitude towards the hegemony of the Western idea about music as objects or works. After Kant, it often seems like Romanticism is to blame.

Romanticism

The renewed question in Romanticism is what music is capable of expressing when detached from its traditional functions. Is the meaning of music to be found, for example, in the

internal structures in the music or in references to something extra-musical? While the music in ancient times, and for a very long time after, was linked to mathematically oriented Pythagorean theories, there was a turning point at the beginning of the eighteenth century when music started to become associated with language. The meaning in music could be translated into verbal language to some extent. However, during the late eighteenth and early nineteenth centuries, there was a development towards emphasizing music as transcending verbal language: saying something that verbal language could not. Instrumental music in particular was considered to express something that transcended any verbal language, opening up for the unspeakable.¹⁶

Poets like Jean Paul, Hölderlin, Novalis, and Hoffmann, critics like Wackenroder and Tieck, and philosophers such as von Schelling and Schopenhauer all give different forms to a metaphysically colored philosophy of music. Arthur Schopenhauer, for example—like a number of other philosophers, including Plato—considers the physical, sensible world as a manifestation of something underlying: the meaning of existence. In an otherwise relatively depressing world of thought, music is a bright spot considered to be a way to gain insight into the deepest underlying cause of existence.

Thus, in the nineteenth century, an understanding of music was developed in the direction of metaphysics and mysticism. This means that the Romantic philosophy of

music opened up for what the ancients referred to as the *mysterium tremendum et fascinans*, an expression that suggests the chill and delight of facing the nameless. The work of art is given a certain “aura.”¹⁷ Elliott contextualizes the idea of music as works of art with these general philosophical and ideological ideas in the Romantic era:

At the heart of this new age and ideology was the belief that all men (but not women) were free, equal, and self-sufficient. The old social order, based on inherited wealth and privilege, was being overturned. . . . The heavy emphasis that past and present aesthetic theories of music place on a contextual, intrinsic, “distanced” contemplation of objects duplicates the basic tenets of this social ideology.¹⁸

To some extent I do follow Elliott’s argument.¹⁹ Let us, however, consider the term “distanced” in this quotation. Elliott seems to understand it as a problematic Romantic idea influenced by Kantian aesthetics, an understanding that underpins his critique of traditional Western classical ideas about music as objects. This way of thinking may be considered related to the historical loss of the aura, which includes loss of distance, of the works of art.

The Age of Technological Reproducibility

Relating to what Max Weber defines as the general process of disenchantment of the world and existence since the time of

the Renaissance and Reformation in Europe, making the world more prosaic and predictable, and less poetic and mysterious,²⁰ Walter Benjamin discusses the transformation of our aesthetic relation to objects and the world entailed by the new technologies of reproducibility.²¹ Through the concept of aura, Benjamin holds on, deepens, and develops the idea of a reciprocal relationship between the subject and the world of things.²² The aura experience relates to our aesthetic relationship to things and the world in general, and thus also our relation to works of art and artistic practice. The transformations that occur in the field of art are results of changes that concern our basic perception of matter, time, and space. The most important change is how technology gives us a power over things that we previously did not have.

In the age of handicraft, we were at the mercy of the qualities of things. But with new technology, the mystical nature of things disappears. The handicraft tradition allows things to retain a kind of distance and mystery. Works of art, like all things, however, lose their aura when technological interference destroys their distanced mysteriousness. The ability to reproduce them—and, of course, the experience of them—takes from them their unique character. This is obvious when it comes to music, which we all know very well is accessible everywhere and anytime for everybody in our Western societies today. This may undermine any idea of experience as deep and transforming.²³

We cannot limit our appraisal of the critique of Romantic ideas about music as works to the strong engagements of the critics in favor of marginalized musics and cultures alone. We have to also consider the art's loss of aura that goes together with this critique. My point is simply that making music a very-everyday-experience of processes and activities—reducing to close to zero any interest in music as works of art—may bring it so close that we have problems acknowledging a work of art in its otherness, as something different from ourselves, or as Martin Buber put it: as a *Thou*. Thus, I argue that *distance* is a prerequisite for any recognition of how important our experience of something as an *Other* is for our own affiliation in the world, and that the very idea of music as works of art is a prerequisite for existential encounters between the subject and the music.

The Idea of Music as a Work of Art; Part-Person-Part-Thing

In an essay called “My Louise Bourgeois,” the American author Siri Hustvedt writes:

I have long argued that the experience of art is made only in the encounter between spectator and art object. . . . We are not the passive recipients of some factual external reality but rather actively creating what we see through the established patterns of the past. . . . But good art surprises us. Good art reorients our expectations, forces us to break the

pattern, to see in a new way.²⁴

This is a well-known idea. The recipient is definitely an active party when it comes to attributing quality and value to a piece of art. However, the last two sentences in the quotation can be interpreted as meaning that the artwork also offers us something other than the confirmation of ourselves. It can break our forms and patterns and exceed our past, our taken-for-grantednesses and blind spots. Good art surprises us. Hustvedt further emphasizes that we, in the artwork, meet something more than just a *thing*. A work of art carries the traces of a living consciousness and unconsciousness. . . . A work of art is always part person. . . . In art, the relation established is between a person and a part-person-part-thing. It is never between a person and just a thing.²⁵

Here, the work of art is considered a *Thou* and not an *It*, it is an expression of another person's consciousness and unconsciousness. There is something in the work of art waiting for us to encounter it. To have such encounters we need to relate to something we can call art: a work of art.

Existential Philosophy and Pedagogy

Otto Friedrich Bollnow's book *Existenzphilosophie und Pädagogik* was published in 1959.²⁶ The starting point for Bollnow's thinking seems to be that the pedagogical, naïve, optimistic belief in humanity has been lost, especially as a result of the experience of World War II.

Reality has forced us to accept that there also exists profoundly evil wickedness. According to the anthropological assumptions in existential philosophy, there is no continuity in a human subject and therefore no opportunity for continuous progress. There are only a few upswings followed by inevitable falls back into inauthenticity. We must always start over and over again. Human beings, as such, are discontinuous beings. This leads to the discussion of discontinuous means in our upbringing, a pedagogy of discontinuity, forms of influence that can intervene on an existential level. The continuous forms of education are not at all invalid. They must, however, be complemented by discontinuous means. In the wide variety of discontinuous forms of education, the concept of *encounter* is very central.

Martin Buber emphasizes that life can only be unfolded in interaction with another Thou. This Thou has a superb autonomy in relation to the *I*. The human subject becomes an *I* by the Thou.²⁷ In this context, Buber introduces the concept of *encounter*. An encounter (with a Thou) cannot be planned. Encounters suddenly appear, and they are also isolated from each other. Nevertheless, in each encounter the whole world is present. It is also important to emphasize that, with the concept of encounter, we do not talk about a fusion of the *I* and the Thou. It is rather the difference and strangeness in the Thou that the *I* encounters with frightening clarity.

Encounters do not only take place between two human subjects but with everything that can be named *spiritual realities*; for example, works of art. I encounter a work of art as a Thou. This Thou meets me as something completely different. Its strangeness asks me, and sometimes forces me, to reorient my life. There is something merciless or relentless in an encounter; it shakes and upsets me; I have to change my life. As the German philosopher Peter Sloterdijk says: "I am already living, but something is telling me with unchallengeable authority: you are not living properly."²⁸ However, there is no direction for this change. This is in itself very unusual in a traditional educational context, not least when the educational goals of today are determined in terms of specific skills that the student has to master after completion of teaching. In an encounter, no guidance is given. An encounter in this sense means the spiritual touch that takes place when a human being is hit by the reality of another human being in the present work; that is to say, existence encounters existence. Or, as the Polish author Witold Gombrowicz says:

The strength of the art, its immovability, its resilience, which is constantly reborn, comes from the fact that it is an individual who expresses themselves through it.²⁹

When a work of art is perceived as a Thou, a part-person-part-thing, it is not at all problematic to insist on the importance of being able to relate to music as a work of art. As said above, being able to relate to music as a work of art is a prerequisite for existential encounters with music as a Thou.

This Thou is something beyond and external to oneself; we are encountering someone else's existence.

However, this does not mean that we only have to relate to so-called "great art". What matters to a human being can meet them in different places. Therefore, we have to emphasize the importance of patient and broad educational work. Since we can never predict or plan encounters, the primary task of teaching must be to make young people aware of the different offerings our cultural life has to give.

For today's readers, Bollnow's ideas may appear both pretentious and outdated. Can such a text from post-war Germany say anything in a music educational situation today? I think so. We have all heard people tell stories about crucial encounters with some particular work of art, encounters that have influenced their lives. In the world of philosophy, ideas and values do not necessarily go out of date in the same way other socio-cultural distinctive characteristics from the time the text is written do. For example, musical existential encounters do not have to be related only to "the great works" of Western classical music because these are the cultural references of a person like Bollnow. On the other hand, since a) the teacher's task first and foremost has to be the broad orientation in the musics that exist and are available to our world of potential experiences; b) not all music offers the same chances for experience to everybody, anytime; and c) it *is* the Western musical tradition that has nurtured the very idea of

music as works of art, it is of course not an idea at all to marginalize or exclude Western classical music in general music education.³⁰

So What, Professor Andersen?

As stated in the introduction of this essay, Professor Andersen, in Dag Solstad's novel, doubts the possibility of moving encounters with works of art from the past. I will argue, however, that the harder it gets to imagine such a possibility, the more important it is to insist on the necessity of encountering works of art in this way; that is, as a Thou. We need our innermost selves to be challenged—as much in 2020 as when Bollnow wrote in 1959—in relation to our individual, social, and political lives. We need to relate to something we can call a work of art.

What this "work" is interests me less. It could be a Mahler symphony or a country song by Willie Nelson, a Norwegian folk tune or an Indian raga. To encounter any work as a Thou, however, we have to encounter it as *art*, not as entertainment. The ultimate criterion of entertainment is to please, and simple pleasure is not the meaning of an encounter with a Thou.³¹ It is interesting to discuss the distinction between art and entertainment in light of the Aristotelian distinction between *eudaimonia* (true happiness) and *hedoné* (superficial happiness). Aristotle's empirical psychological point of departure is the human being's natural affection for music. Music is by nature a source of pleasure and

joy. He is, however, skeptical about the growing acceptance of the pure pleasure aspect (hedoné) in the society of his time. He remarks that people sometimes miss the point by making pleasure the aim of life. The highest goal and purpose (*diagogé*) may well involve pleasure but not of a hedonistic kind (hedoné).³²

Aristotle then evaluates music's possible functions in the human being's development towards the highest purpose of life. In this development, the function of character formation/*Bildung* (*ethos*) is brought into play. Music may, in Aristotle's view, further the human being's development into a life in accordance with virtue and excellence (*areté*) by the formation of its character. This view is in accordance with the tradition from Plato. According to Aristotle, it is an empirical fact that music affects us. Tonalities, melodies, and rhythms are all considered carriers of character (*ethos*). As a consequence, one should use music that carries and furthers the right and good character. In contrast to Plato's stricter evaluation of tonalities, Aristotle maintains that it is possible to use any tonality, but in different ways and for different purposes.

Music's character formation/*Bildung* function thus opens the way for music's highest purpose and meaning: virtuous activity (*diagogé*). Through character formation with the help of music and the training of musical judgment ability, one reaches a level where it is possible to have a higher, spiritual, more virtuous and reflective experience of music. This

experience unifies the experience of pleasure and recreation with the experience of the good, the true, and the beautiful.³³ This function of music is the one that brings true happiness (eudaimonia).³⁴

Compared to hedoné, the immediate satisfaction, eudaimonia is about experiencing the *slowness* of true happiness through the *weight* of existential encounters. Thus, the slowness and weight of encounters with musical works as a Thou can be considered as aspects of experiencing life as meaningful and worth living.³⁵

The Pleasure of Slowness and Weight

The Czech-born author Milan Kundera, resident in France since the 1970s, writes about his longing for the slowness:

Why has the pleasure of slowness disappeared? Ah, where have they gone, the amblers of yesteryear? Where have they gone, these loafing heroes of folk song, those vagabonds who roam from one mill to another and bed down under the stars? Have they vanished along with footpaths, with grasslands and clearings, with nature?³⁶

As he longs for slowness, Kundera values the qualities in a concept such as weight, even if we often seem to prefer lightness:

[T]he absolute absence of a burden causes man to be lighter than air, to soar into heights, take leave the earth and his earthly being, and become

only half real, his movements as free as they are insignificant.³⁷

Some years ago, the two outstanding Norwegian researchers Dag Østerberg and Anne Danielsen had a public dispute about the place and function of Western classical music in the lives of people today, as well as in musicological research and the public sphere. The sociologist Dag Østerberg, from his neo-Marxist philosophical point of view, argued that the field of music—as it was formed in our Western societies during the last half of the nineteenth century—has radically changed since the 1970s. To him, the music of our time is either locked into a kind of research laboratory for specialists or is everyday life entertainment. The inclusion of pop and rock in traditional areas of high culture (such as the annual Nobel Peace Prize Concert in Norway) as if there exists no difference between art and entertainment, Østerberg suggested, narrows our horizons in a way that makes the essential features of the existing society more and more easy to take for granted.

The musicologist Anne Danielsen—expert on funk, Prince, and James Brown—started out by accepting the fact that Østerberg grieves over the loss of the weight of the great Western tradition of classical music. Further, Danielsen argued that the kind of slowness and weight that Østerberg finds in Western classical music comes from another time, another experience of existence. However, as Danielsen—maybe a bit paradoxically—accepted Østerberg’s longing as legitimate, she saw no other sources for such experiences than to reactivate the great

musical works of the past. In spite of their disagreements, Danielsen and Østerberg then seemed to agree that Western classical music has some aesthetical qualities, related to slowness and weight, that pop and rock music do not have.³⁸

Every discussion about aesthetical quality exists in the tension between a belief in universal norms on the one hand and relativism on the other.³⁹ However, there is a third possibility between these two extremes: a *particularistic normative* position.⁴⁰ From this point of view, the question about quality is always related to certain musical genres, certain groups of people, certain pedagogical situations, and certain educational goals. From such a position it is, for example, possible to consider choices of music educational content in relation to the purpose of the pedagogical situation.

As said above, it is a banal fact that all music does not offer the same possibilities for experience to everybody, anytime. And, since we can never predict or plan encounters, the primary task of teaching must be to make young people aware of the different offerings our cultural life, including all kinds of musics, has to give. Furthermore, a prerequisite for strong encounters between the human subject and music is the very idea of music as a work of art, a part-person-part-thing. Even further, as pointed out by Bohlman, Small, and Elliott, it *is* the Western musical tradition that has nurtured the idea of music as works of art. From these factors I think it is time, in my cultural context, to rethink and

revitalize the relationship between general music education and the tradition of Western classical music, transcending the critique of its focus on music as works

(objects), to offer our children and youth spaces for encounters with music as a Thou.

Notes

- 1 Dag Solstad, *Professor Andersen's Night* (London: Vintage, 2012), 112.
- 2 Ibid., 112-13.
- 3 Fyodor M. Dostoevsky, *The Devils* (London: Penguin Books, 1953/1971. First published in Russian, 1872).
- 4 Estelle Jorgensen, *Transforming Music Education* (Bloomington and Indianapolis: Indiana University Press, 2003), 78–79.
- 5 Øivind Varkøy, *Musikk – strategi og lykke [Music—Strategy and Happiness]* (Oslo: Cappelen Akademisk Forlag, 2003), 192–93.
- 6 Even Ruud, *Pop og rock i klasserommet [Pop and Rock in the Classroom]* (Oslo: Norsk Musikforlag, 1981).
- 7 See, for example, Pierre Bourdieu, *Distinction. A Social Critique of the Judgment of Taste* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1984); Simon Frith, *Performing Rites: Evaluating Popular Music* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1996); Simon Frith, “Music and Identity,” in *Questions of Cultural Identity*, ed. Stuart Hall and Paul du Gay (London: Sage, 1996); Christopher Small, *Musicking: The Meanings of Performing and Listening* (Middletown, CT: Wesleyan University Press, 1998); Tia DeNora, *After Adorno* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2003); and Pamela Burnard, Ylva Hofvander Trulsson, and Johan Söderman, eds., *Bourdieu and the Sociology of Music Education* (Farnham: Ashgate, 2015).
- 8 I am very well aware that within the tradition of cultural studies it is regarded as problematic to call a cultural tradition marginalized when it has been the hegemonic one for centuries. This concept is more or less reserved for cultural traditions with a history of marginalization in and exclusion from school subjects and society in general.
- 9 See Jorgensen, *Transforming Music Education*, 80–92, for a brilliant, in-depth discussion of what she calls “Five Images”: music as aesthetic object, music as symbol, music as practical activity, music as experience, and music as agency.
- 10 Philip V. Bohlman, “Ontologies of Music,” in *Rethinking Music*, ed. Nicholas Cook and Mark Everist (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2001), 18.
- 11 Christopher Small, *Musicking: The Meanings of Performing and Listening* (Middletown, CT: Wesleyan University Press, 1998), 2.
- 12 Ibid., 3.

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- 13 See Hanne Fossum (now Rinholm) and Øivind Varkøy, “The Changing Concept of Aesthetic Experience in Music Education,” in *Nordic Research in Music Education. Yearbook Vol. 14, 2012*, 9–26, for a critical discussion of Elliott’s philosophy concerning the concept of aesthetic experience related to the German concept *Ästhetische Erfahrung* and the Norwegian concept *estetisk erfaring*.
- 14 David Elliott, *Music Matters: A New Philosophy of Music Education* (New York/Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1995), 23.
- 15 Ibid., 25-26.
- 16 See Øivind Varkøy, *Hvorfor musikk? [Why Music?]* (Oslo: Gyldendal Akademisk, 1993/2015), chapter 5, for a slightly longer discussion of the philosophy of music in Romanticism. There is also a German translation of this book: *Warum Musik?* (Esslingen: Helbling, 2016).
- 17 Walter Benjamin, “The Work of Art in Its Technological Reproducibility,” in *Walter Benjamin, Selected Writings, Volume 4, 1938–1940*, ed. Howard Eiland and Michael W. Jennings (Cambridge, MA, and London, England: Harvard University Press, 2003).
- 18 Elliott, *Music Matters*, 23-24.
- 19 What surprises me in Elliott’s historical and sociological contextualization of the idea of music as works of art, however, is that no focus is given to the positive impact of the idea of the autonomous individual, not any more controlled by “arbitrary laws handed down from aristocracy.”
- 20 Max Weber, *The Protestant Ethic and the Spirit of Capitalism* ([First published 1904] New York: Oxford University Press, 2011).
- 21 Walter Benjamin, “The Work of Art in Its Technological Reproducibility.”
- 22 Benjamin’s aura concept is very different from the theosophical and anthroposophical use of the term.
- 23 Concerning Benjamin, see Dag T. Andersson, “Erfaring og mimesis. Et redningsmotiv i Walter Benjamins filosofi” [“Experience and Mimesis. A Rescue Motif in the Philosophy of Walter Benjamin”], and Mikkel Bolt, “Benjamin og Trump. Fascisme, kontrarevolusjon og æstetisering af politikken” [“Benjamin and Trump: Fascism, Contrarevolution, and Aesthetification of Politics”], both in *Agora. Journal for metafysisk spekulasjon, no. 2–3 [Agora: Journal for Metaphysical Speculation]* (Oslo: Aschehoug, 2017).
- 24 Siri Hustvedt, “My Louise Bourgeois,” in *A Woman Looking at Men Looking at Women: Essays on Art, Sex, and the Mind* (New York: Simon & Schuster, 2016), 25-26.
- 25 Ibid., 26.
- 26 Otto Friedrich Bollnow, *Eksistensfilosofi og pedagogikk [Existential Philosophy and Pedagogy]* (Oslo: Fabritius og Sønners Forlag, 1969).
- 27 Martin Buber, *I and Thou* (London: Continuum, 2004).
- 28 Peter Sloterdijk, *You Must Change Your Life* (Cambridge, UK, and Malden, MA: Polity Press, 2013), 25.

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- 29 Witold Gombrowicz, *Dagboken 1959-1969* [*The Diary 1959-1969*] (Oslo: Flamme Forlag, 2013), 76 (my translation from Norwegian to English).
- 30 This is why the defense of the work of art in this article, includes a defense of Western classical music in music education. However, the idea of music as works of art is not limited to Western classical music; it exists for example even in contexts of jazz and rock.
- 31 Dag Østerberg, "Musikklandskapetets forvandling" ["Transformations in the Field of Music"], *Nytt Norsk Tidsskrift* 3-4 (2009).
- 32 See Joar Vittersø, ed., *Handbook of Eudaimonic Well-Being* (Cham, Switzerland: Springer, 2016).
- 33 See Hanne Rinholm's (former Fossum) essay elsewhere in this book.
- 34 Aristotle, *Politikken* [*Politics*] (Oslo: Vidarforlaget, 2007), and *Den nikomakiske etikk* [*Nicomachean Ethics*] (Oslo: Bokklubbens Kulturbibliotek, 1999). See also Øivind Varkøy, *Hvorfor musikk?* [*Why Music?*] (Oslo: Gyldendal Akademisk, 1993/2015), chapter 1, about the philosophy of music and music education in Greek antiquity. There is also a German translation of this book: *Warum Musik?* (Esslingen: Helbling, 2016).
- 35 See Hubert Dreyfus and Sean D. Kelly, *All Things Shining: Reading the Western Classics to Find Meaning in a Secular Age* (New York: Free Press, 2011). Dreyfus and Kelly surely disagree with "Professor Andersen."
- 36 Milan Kundera, *Slowness* (New York, London, Toronto, Sydney: Harper Perennial, 2002), 3.
- 37 Milan Kundera, *The Unbearable Lightness of Being* (New York: Harper & Row, Publishers, 1984), 5-6.
- 38 Dag Østerberg, 2009. Anne Danielsen, "Kunsten forgår, musikken består – om popmusikk og kunst i globaliseringens tidsalder" ["The Art Perishes, the Music Lasts—On Pop Music in Times of Globalization"], *Nytt Norsk Tidsskrift* 3-4, (2009).
- 43 While it seems problematic to find researchers in music education today arguing from a universalistic position, relativism has permeated musicological and music pedagogical literature for decades (at least in my part of the world). Simon Frith is a classic in this context. In *Performing Rites: Evaluating Popular Music* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1996), and "Music and Identity," in *Questions of Cultural Identity*, ed. Stuart Hall and Paul du Gay (London: Sage, 1996), he argues, for example, that musical experiences are constituted discursively as relations between music, subjects, and groups, as well as the social and cultural contexts of these connections and relations. What seems to be purely aesthetic always carries subjective and collective interests, values, and identities. However, there is reason to ask whether this ideological agenda is a productive impulse in today's Scandinavian context, where music education based on a strong focus on the cultural interests of the youngsters—something which of course is a good thing seen from a democratic perspective—has found itself in a new democratic problem, because it is depriving pupils of a wide spectrum of musics and musical forms of expression. See, for example, Eva Georgii-Hemming and Maria Westvall, "Teaching Music in Our Time: Student Music Teachers' Reflections on Music Education, Teacher Education and Becoming a Teacher," *Music Education Research* 12, no. 4 (2010). Furthermore, it seems like we are facing a situation where the power of definition concerning artistic quality has moved from an old cultural elite with universalistic attitudes to a new cultural elite with a relativistic position. The ways of thinking within this new cultural elite

exist in an unintentional and/or unconscious alliance with an economic elite, often favoring popular culture—not least as a commercial arena. Continued argument about marginalization of popular culture in music education and continued critique of the power of definition of the old cultural elite—without any interest in the fact that in Scandinavia today, this is primarily of historical interest—will easily end up like a “useful fool” for right wing populism in favor of so-called ordinary people. See Petter Dyndahl and Øivind Varkøy, “Hva er musikk godt for? B: Om musikkundervisning, likhet og ulikhet” [“What Is Music Good For? B: On Music Education, Equality and Difference”], in Øivind Varkøy, *Musikk – dannelse og eksistens* [Music—Bildung and Existence] (Oslo: Cappelen Damm Akademisk, 2017).

40 Frede V. Nielsen, “Quality and Value in the Interpretation of Music from a Phenomenological Point of View—A Draft,” in *Zeitschrift für Kritische Musikpädagogik*, ed. Jürgen Vogt (2002). See also Øivind Varkøy, “La oss snakke om kvalitet. Et forsøk” [“Let’s Talk about Quality. A Draft”], in *Utdanningsforskning i musikk – didaktiske, sosiologiske og filosofiske perspektiver* [Educational Research in Music—Didactical, Sociological and Philosophical Perspectives], eds. Siw Graabræk Nielsen and Øivind Varkøy (Oslo: Norwegian Academy of Music, 2017).

About the Author

Øivind Varkøy is Professor of Music Education and Head of Ph.D. programs at Norwegian Academy of Oslo, and a Visiting Professor of Music at Oslo Metropolitan University. Varkøy holds a doctoral degree in musicology. He has published a number of articles in *Philosophy of Music Education Review*, as well as in other journals and anthologies, on topics such as *Bildung*, instrumentalism and technical rationality, intrinsic value of musical experience, and musical experience as existential experience. In 2015 Varkøy (together with Frederik Pio) edited the anthology *Philosophy of Music Education Challenged: Heideggerian Inspirations* (Springer).

Project Links

This chapter comes from a book titled *The Road Goes Ever On: Estelle Jorgensen’s Legacy in Music Education*. The philosophical essays contained within focus on themes that have intrigued Estelle Jorgensen whose forty years of scholarship have strongly influenced music education research and practice: the transformation of music education in public schools; feminist and LGBTQ voices; mentoring; the unfinished search for new ways of seeing, hearing, and doing; multiple and intersecting musical identities; the tension between tradition and change; and activist practice in music education.

The complete book can be found at the following link: <https://ir.lib.uwo.ca/jorgensen/>