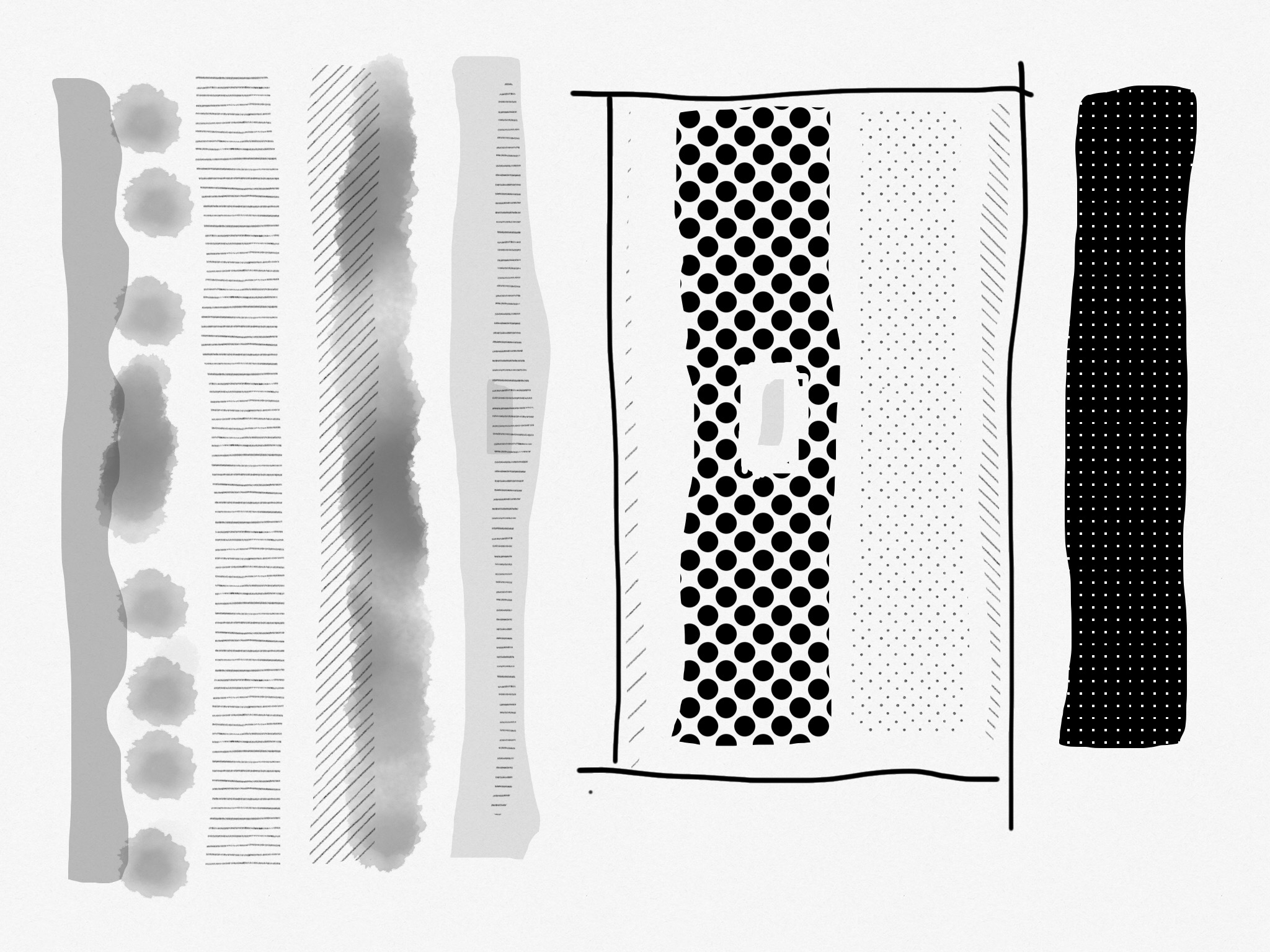
**“Ways of Listening”**

**Ethnographies of Listening, Auditory Play and Music Poetics.**

**An Action Research Proposal.**

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Draft: Not for Quotation.

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**Abstract.**

This paper explores the cultural knowledge practices of listening from an anthropological perspective, drawing on a critical musicology. It takes as its starting point the audience as a group and social system, listening to live performances of classical instrumental music. It considers three operational levels: 1. Audience members’ personal listening practices and repertoire; 2. How live music is interpreted and understood to have significance and meaning for listeners; and 3. The emergence of a discourse of shared aesthetic appraisal. An interdisciplinary literature review of studies of listening is placed within a hermeneutic framework and from this a listening model: *Auditory Play* is derived, (see Section 13 for diagram of *Auditory Play Modes*). This model is proposed for application and development in an *Action Research Program* (see Section 2). The program proposes the creation of a standing *Listening Research Seminar,* and a number of *Active Listening Groups.* The qualitative research output is envisaged as *Ethnographies of Listening*, together with other writing about listening to music referred to as *Music Poetics*.

**1. Introduction.**

Musical listening is never an act of unmediated perception, rather it is perception informed with knowledge, and hence a skill (Spitzer, 2004).

In listening to music the same experience takes sound as its object, and also something that is not and cannot be sound – the life and movement that is music. We hear this life and movement *in* the sound, and situate it in an imagined space, organised, as is the phenomenal space of our own experience. (Scruton,1999).

What exactly the content of music is, this intangible substance that is expressible only through sound. It cannot be defined as having merely a mathematical, a poetic or a sensual content. It is all those things and much more. It has to do with the condition of being human (Barenboim, 2009).

It is only after the action of striking a chord (a visual, physical act in a single moment of time) that one can really listen to its reverberation, hanging in the air indefinitely (invisible, without physical form, out of time). This is the key to the power of music in its sounding out of modernity, that its physicality as sound is both urgently and bodily of the world, here and now, but quickly vanishes in order to leave an imprint, that survives its own absence. It is precisely into the silence, it the absence that follows it, that music projects the promise of it continuing presence, the resonant space between language and sound. (Johnson, 2015)

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1.1. How does music move people, give them pleasure and become significant? What is personal listening and what of our listening can be shared as aesthetic discourse? An initial observation is that we know little of how and what audiences ‘make’ of listening to live classical music. The audience is mute, their personal experiences, their aesthetic discourse is underexplored. One way of exploring these experiences might be to focus on listening practices and the interpretive perspectives that arise from them. A series of questions then arise. Are there differences in ways of listening? Is it possible to design ways of exploring listening disciplines and interpretive frameworks? How marked are differences between different groups of auditors: are there differently informed ‘ears’? How has aurality changed over time? Can listeners learn to develop their repertoire for listening? How does sensation become sense, interpretation and meaning in the reception of music? Is the audience the consuming terminus for the intentions of composers and the interpretations of conductors and performers, or do new valid and authoritative meanings arise in the reception of music? Can listeners give accounts of their experiences of listening to music in words? What would these accounts be like? Could they be shared with others, and would this be a coherent and unifying aesthetic discourse?

1.2. It is these questions that provide the impetus for the research proposal set out here. I support the proposal through a series of essay sections which attempt an interdisciplinary review of the literature on Listening. I propose certain structures: a co-ordinating *Listening Research Seminar*, participative *Active Listening Groups* in an *Action-Research* methodology that will operationalize the questions raised. I take the hermeneutic circle common to qualitative research, and develop it as a model for this project. I derive a model of *Auditory Play*, a multi-dimensional set of listening modes, from the studies reviewed, and propose that this will be tested and refined as part of the research. I posit that an ethnographic and phenomenological approach to participatory engagement with *Active Listening Groups* by researchers will produce written accounts called *Ethnographies of Listening*. I suggest that these can be content-analysed using the template of the model of *Auditory Play*. I further suggest that these accounts can be shared in designed *Listening Events* and the shared discourse documented. I theorise that this type of material may give rise to new styles of *Program Notes, Reviews* and that a genre of creative writing called *Music Poetics* may emerge. The program fits around the live music program in St Andrews and would recruit its participants from Music Centre members, St Andrews Chorus and other local sources. The creation of a live Website. ‘Hark’ to support the project will carry materials produced during the research process. I suggest that the program would have benefits to the actual and potential audiences for live classical music in St Andrews and be of interest to the Music Centre. A small scale pilot study should be undertaken.

**2. Working Thesis, and Action -Research Program.**

2.1 A research program requires a robust theoretical model that: defines a problem or question and proffers a thesis; reviews the major literature and thereby refines the focus and thesis; proposes a methodology that supports participatory engagement, fieldwork and the interpretive strategies that can be applied to the data collected; and identifies the impact and learning that the study will have. This learning must also show connections to existing programs of learning.

2.2. In a highly participative, action-research strategy such as this, the elements must be consistent with the ways participants engage in the project. The benefits and outcomes that participants and commissioning/funding sources will expect must be clear. The participatory nature of the project means that Ethics Committee approval will be required. I suggest that this proposal has the potential to meet these criteria through further discussion and development, initially within the Music Centre and in conjunction with the Depts. of Anthropology and English.

This proposal is based on the following presuppositions:

2.3. The musicological field of hermeneutics of music is a developing area of research. Cultural practices of listening, sense-making, interpretation and aesthetics are all implicated in exploring how audiences engage with live music, how it becomes meaningful to them and how aesthetic appreciation of musical works and performances becomes culturally sedimented. These matters are open to University based research. A *Listening Seminar* is proposed which will guide the research, promote papers on these subject areas, host seminars and conferences, and develop the website. The *Listening Seminar* will also oversee a pilot study of this proposal. There will be core foundational membership drawn from a number of disciplines. I would suggest that anthropology, creative writing, and philosophical hermeneutics be represented and Music Centre Musicians would be central to it, and the latter will provide the Convenor.

2.4. There are practices and disciplines of listening, ‘knowledge practices’ that we can know more about from accounts given by auditors. These accounts can be gathered by anthropological fieldwork practice: notes of group discussions, individual one-to one taped interviews, journal notes created by auditors and shared with the researcher. This data can be written up as a series of *Ethnographies of Listening* by a dialogic method between the auditors and a researcher. The sources for the ethnography will include: the specific personal practices of listening to a series of musical events/pieces; the experience of concert-going and listening in context with others; descriptions of interpretive and sense-making strategies that the auditors deploy. The dialogical nature of the research thereby includes a reflexive aspect as the researcher gives back to the auditor their descriptions of these listening elements and further commentary is generated upon them. I posit that these *Ethnographies of Listening* will embody and display a repertoire of listening practices and that these can be mapped and compared with my model of *Auditory Play.* This AP model will be tested and developed using the ethnographic data.

2.5.. I consider that we know little about the audience’s listening practices, meaning-making and shared aesthetic appreciation. I contend that an ‘audience’ is a social system, that it is constituted by, and constitutes a *habitus* for listening. Auditors performatively ‘compose’ themselves in relation to music through their postures of listening in co-presence and co-sentience. Auditors are performers, of stillness, silence, attentiveness, reverie and many other modes, and are interpreters and constitute and are thereby constituted by both a group dynamic and a ritualised cultural history of listening. I suggest that an audience is a participatory group of ritualising auditors who, by their listening repertoires, sense-making and potential shared aesthetic discourse, become an interpretive necessity in the full realisation of a musical art-work. This feature of listening and interpretation is theorised using concepts such as ‘habitus’ , ‘hexis’ and ‘disposition’ from Bourdieu (1977). This thesis can be tested against the ethnographic material gathered from auditors’ accounts of their experiences of listening to live music with others as noted above.

2.6.. As a strategic research framework I propose a *Hermeneutic model of Audition and Interpretation*, which is set out below. The model identifies the elements of ‘composition’ through to ‘performance’, ‘listening’ and ‘interpretation’ in a non-linear way. The model identifies a number of *interpretive spaces* as part of a process which reflects the standard *hermeneutic circle* in use in the social sciences. In these *interpretive spaces* are *hermeneutic windows* as theorised by Kramer (2011*)*. Examples of such interpretive spaces would be: the perspective, the interpretive *‘subject position’* proffered to the audience by the conductor/animateur; the *habitus* of listening constituted by the listening audience. The model will be critiqued, refined and developed as part of the research program.

2.7. The research methodology will deploy a three level empirical focus through a number of enabling participatory structures set up under the *Listening Seminar:*

A. Listening as an embodied cultural practice: understanding the audience members’ personal listening practices and repertoire.

B. Interpretation and meaning-making: exploring how live music is interpreted and understood to have significance and meaning for listeners.

C. Hermeneutics and Aesthetic discourse: exploring an emerging discourse/genre of shared aesthetic appraisal. This empirical level of inquiry will require the *Active Listening Groups* coming together in larger events, *Live Listening Events*. These Events will be designed to combine challenging listening, playing with sound, experiments in listening performance, participation, and documented discussion. The research purpose is to explore how personal listening and meaning-making, interpretive strategies become shared aesthetic appreciation. It relates to the question: how ‘convergent’ are shared aesthetic judgements as compared with the multiplicity of personal responses to music?

2.8. The enabling participatory structures will be:

*Active Listening Groups.* These will be small groups (max. 8 people) promoted under the LS and Music Centre and be analogous with ‘Book Clubs’. They will differ from that model by alternating musical listening choices between a) members preferences and b) a piece from listening curricula designed by the Music Centre membership of the Listening Seminar. These *Active Listening Groups* will be supported by the LS/Music Centre Musicians, and who will provide one ‘intervention’ in each group during the semester meetings. This will include be a pre-listening preparatory input, and guidance in post-listening discussion. Members of ALGs will attend other larger LS Listening Events. They might meet monthly during Semesters and attend live performances associated with the Music Centre and the Byre Theatre. Four such groups would constitute 32 potential respondents. Their group listening sessions would entail listening and discussing in three modes: to a piece of music at a live event in the musical calendar of St Andrews music; to a piece from a *Listening Seminar* curriculum[[1]](#footnote-1); and to pieces of their choice. The members’ introductions to these latter choices will also be a useful source for the ethnographies of listening. The student’ researcher would tape and make fieldnotes and, with quotations and observations, construct an *Ethnography of Listening* linked to these pieces of music. This documentation can also be shared with members of the group and other groups via the ‘Hark’ Website. Members of these groups might also be willing to be taped during and after listening to a live musical performance, or to complete a *Listening Survey.* There could be a fruitful partnering with the St Andrew’s Chorus and other choirs in St Andrews in order to constitute these groups. This activity would also contribute to the development of audiences with ‘informed ears’ for listening to live music.

2.9. The disciplinary perspective for the research is anthropological [[2]](#footnote-2), with the support of an interdisciplinary literature review set out in the following sections of this paper. The starting anthropological questions are: what is it that listeners do? What do they say they do? What do they say music means to them? I propose that *Ethnographies of Listening* can be gathered (dialogically between researcher and listener/members of the *Active Listening Groups*) and that thereby we will be able to map and identify a repertoire of listening practices that can inform the development of the model of *Auditory Play* I set out below. I also theorise that these accounts of listening practices, the contents of the ethnographies, will constitute a *shared aesthetic discourse.* In this we would expectto see patterns of personal meaning, diversity and also convergent aesthetic understandings of music. I speculate that this pattern of divergent interpretation (personal) and convergent interpretation (social) informs our understanding of the sociality of listening. It may open a number of avenues for exploration. First the relationship between the individual listener and the audience as a social system/group in ways theorised by Douglas (1999) and the way certain listening biases, regimes and habitus are established and maintained. Second the ethnographic material may enable personal listening experiences, as discussed by Nancy, to be understood more fully as reflexive subjectivity. Third it may provide a bridge between patterned formalists such as Kivy (2002), anti-reception theorists such as Zangwill (2007) and the hermeneutic perspectives of Scruton and Kramer, in that it links the convergent shared aesthetic discourse to the integrity and independence of the art-work whilst allowing for wide interpretive diversity in individual reception. *Active Listening Events* for the members of *Active Listening Groups* will be designed as part of the research methodology to enable this shared aesthetic discourse to be documented.

2.10. I theorise that when listeners speak about their musical experiences they will deploy metaphor. Metaphor will be an extensive feature of the ethnographies and the shared aesthetic discourse. What may emerge through the writing of ethnographies is an emergent creative written expression of listening to music, a genre that I call *Music Poetics*. I theorise that the contents of this *Music Poetics* will be influenced by underlying *schema* and will be expressed in a series of interrelated cognitive metaphors that are related to the combining of elements of harmony, rhythm, melody and timbre as having cognitive metaphorical weight. Further that these cognitive metaphors are linked to a non-linguistic, embodied resonance and bodily movements which are imaginatively activated by listening to music. This analysis will test the theory put forward by Spitzer (2004) and might link with the University of Glasgow project on metaphor in different disciplines. This *Music Poetics* genre will deploy language to express the necessarily non-linguistic elements of music, and offer an understanding of the relationship between music and language. I further speculate that this genre of *Music Poetics* will have an influence on the style and content of written *Reviews* and *Programme Notes* (see undergraduate module proposals*)* by expanding their points of reference to include new generative responses to music events that will be shown to be available in the ethnographies. In short, that writing about music will include more personal, embodied resonances and responses, that will deploy some shared metaphors, narratives and creative ways of interpreting the composition. These can also be comparative and stand alongside performers and conductors’ interpretations.

2.11. In order to begin the enquiry at a certain manageable point I take as a point of departure: *listening to music as an audience, to live performance, and to classical[[3]](#footnote-3) instrumental music.* In other words begining with ‘pure’ or ‘absolute’ music as music and without the addition at this stage of the semantic freight of words and text. This leaves these extensive areas of: the relationship between words, text and music; and the areas of personal private listening to non-live recorded music, for further study. These domains will no doubt clamour for attention as we delineate the inter-disciplinary and practice issues that arise for discussion in the restricted areas in which we begin the study. Not least because it will be conceded that ‘absolute instrumental music’ is a late modern emergent and that music’s relation with words and ritual precede this development in the history of aurality. This starting position has however, the merit of relatively low complexity in exploring the relationship between the experience of listening to music, listening practices, and how and why we find music meaningful.

2.12. A text-based curriculum covering *Ethnography and* *Aesthetics of Aurality* will be developed for use in undergraduate teaching, possibly drawing on materials and the bibliography in this paper. Students would undertake a *Live Project* in which they would work with an *Active Listening Group* to gather materials. They will write a short *Ethnography of Listening*. Students will write a *Program Note*, a short *Soundscape* (which would include auto-ethnographic/self-composed material) and a *Performance Review*. These could be posted on the *Hark* Website. These different forms of writing will enable different perspectives on the topics of listening, sense-making and aesthetic discourse to be shared and explored.

2.13. Undergraduate learning tasks will include having a personal *Live Project* which will include four elements and outputs:

(a) Learning to do fieldwork and to write an *Ethnography of Listening*, by working (as a researcher) with a Music Centre facilitator in one of the *Active Listening Groups.* This will be essay length, ie. approx. 3,000 words.

(b) Composing, collecting, arranging and editing a *Soundscape* (see commentary on the work of Oliveras, below) and writing a commentary on it. This would be no more than 5 minutes in duration.

(c) Writing a *Review* of a live performance and writing a *Program Note* for one of the pieces to be heard by an *Active Listening Group*. These pieces would be between 500-800 words maximum

2.14. If a PhD student wished to pursue this topic then this paper would simply be a resource of ideas and references for them. A focussed PhD type of research would need to fix upon specific areas in this wide project. For the purposes of these essays and the overview of a highly participative project I have been wide ranging in the literature review and the inclusion of theory. PhD research will need to be narrower, more focussed and detailed on the elements of theory, practice, methodology, and outcomes, than the broad outline presented here.

2.15. Consideration of the Web design to support this project will be a task for those managing the project. At present I have had initial discussions with a Web-designer. The domain names Hark.org.uk, and Earplay.org.uk, and Earplay.eu are owned by the author, with a possible option on Hark.uk in future. Since this participatory research will be in real time in the context of live music making in St Andrews then the materials that are generated in certain area of the research can be made available to other publics via the website: especially the ethnographic outputs from the *Active Listening Groups,* and from the undergraduate module, for example *Program Notes, Reviews and Soundscapes.* There is a case for a website devoted exclusively to listening to live music, which can document and share the ongoing findings of the research project with the public, or more narrowly with those who sign up for participation.

2.16. Having sketched out the rationale for the program I now attempt to address some of the research questions, and to justify the project. I structure this review by providing an overview and then a series of linked essays which take the discussion further in more depth. I first offer a schematic map of the project:

**The Listening Seminar Project**

Learning Outputs and Research Data

***Reviews***

***Program Notes*** ***Ethnographies of Listening***

ACTIVE

LISTENING

GROUPS

Documentation

Marking

Student &

Researcher Presentations

Meta-Analysis of Ethnographies of Listening

Undergraduate

Module

St Andrews

Concert

Program

Music Centre

Facilitators

PhD Researcher

Listening

Curriculum

Development

Seminars

Listening Events

HARK – Website

The Listening

Seminar

Convenor

Core

Membership

Fieldwork

Live Student

Projects

**3. A Brief Summary of the Literature on Listening.**

3.1. Exploration of listening practices is a developing musicological subject area. The Open University has recently launched a project in this area. Sheffield University are holding a conference on *The Audience* in 2015. The Welcome Foundation and the BBC are partnering to produce a series of programs on *The Listening Brain* to be broadcast in 2015. Music theory and formal analysis in musicology has been joined by wider approaches to interpretation, including: participatory engagement by audiences; exploration of interpretive strategies in conducting (Williams, 2016, forthcoming); performative interpretation, which Kramer (2011) has called ‘critical musicology’­, ‘music hermeneutics’ and ‘open interpretation’. Practices of listening, articulations of what is heard, and the sharing of aesthetic appreciation are three aspects of the way audiences respond to live musical performance. The following summary of the interdisciplinary material on listening establishes the intellectual and experiential grounds for this project and provides source material for the interpretive tasks related to the ethnographic data.

3.2. ***Ambient Sound.***

Pauline Oliveras (Oliveras, 2005) a composer has broadened out listening practices in her programme of *Deep Listening.* Here ambient sounds, listened to as a situated ‘soundscape’, linked to holistic practices of the body, are developed (usually in group contexts) to enhance our range, curiosity, and creativity in both listening to and composing music. These programs have produced their own documentation gathered by Buzzarte and Bickley (2012). Modes of listening: globally (to the whole); locally (to specific parts and details); and contrapuntally (to simultaneous interrelationships) are opened up, and leads to further exploration of our listening and hearing repertoires.

3.3. ***Phenomenology of Sound.***

Idhe’s work on the phenomenology of sound (Ihde, 1976, 2007) makes permeable the distinction in practice between sound and music, and draws out attention to the specific effects of sound upon us. The relationship between sound and music – as an intelligible, patterned, intended and creative sonic imaginative ­– is here also developed in a non-reductive fashion. Listening to the world, it’s shapes, its temporality, it horizons in the auditory field creates ‘a polyphony of experience’ and opens up the relationships between sound, music and language, silence, the nature of embodied sound and the auditory imagination.

3.4. ***New Sounds.***

The relationship between sound and music is not static in the sense that new sounds are being produced electronically, and these and ambient sounds are used in composition. The ability to manipulate frequency, amplitude and volume of sounds, the development of synthesisers, software design and computer skills have created the possibilities of new sonic and musical worlds. This in turn has an effect on listening practices. Listening to instrumental classical music has depended on the listener being able to identify the source of the musical sound as recognisably a particular instrument producing a recognised sound. This in turn produces new ways of describing these musical experiences. An example would be the compositions of Matthew Herbert.

3.5. ***Social Psychology.***

Social psychologists such as North and Hargreaves (2008) have developed an approach to ‘experimental aesthetics’ which explores aspects of arousal, emotion, familiarity, expectation, and pleasure in listening to music. Huron (2007) has developed further analysis of the ways in which listeners move from expectation, pattern-recognition, to appraisal. In both these research areas the authors have produced theoretical models that map listening practices, a *reciprocal feedback model of musical response* by the former and a *typology of five expectation-related response systems* by the latter. Arousal theories are however contested. Are certain harmonies, keys or intervals intrinsically associated with certain emotional responses, and if so how? What is the relation between measurable physical states and personal meanings, the history of these meanings and current personal associations? Such simple arousal theories falter in face of distinctions between, for example, having the feeling that is characteristic of sadness with no object, and being sad *about* something. Not only is the object often absent in music, there is a distinction in experience between actually being sad, and empathising with sadness by an act of imagination. These distinctions between imagination, empathy and arousal are fully explored by Walton (2015) in *In Other Shoes*. Further distinctions between, emotions, feeling, sensations and moods, plus the way in which attributions to music are made, in particular those culturally learned, make the use of the concept ‘arousal’ as the basis for thinking about musical listening and it’s a/effects limited in its analytic usefulness. In short such reductive biological explanations do not describe personal meanings. However, research based on arousal theories does point to another feature of music listening which might be termed the ‘convergence and commodification’. It seems that the market tends to reproduce musical styles to suit a listening public whose desire for familiarity creates a convergence in style of composition. Comparisons have been made between music and the visual arts by Stubbs in his aptly titled book: *Fear of Music: Why People Get Rothko but do not get Stockhausen* (2009). Music is undoubtedly expressive, but how it is expressive remains an intriguing issue. This project can enable a debate between social psychological approaches and an anthropological one informed by the hermeneutic approach of Kramer (2007).

3.6. ***Phenomenology of Listening.***

Taking another trajectory on listening practices, we encounter the theoretical work of Jean-Luc Nancy, (Nancy, 1995) and Szendy (2008). Nancy explores the phenomenology of listening by developing the distinction between ‘listening’ and ‘hearing’. To listen is to situate oneself on a liminal place, to be on the edge. Sense-making is rooted in an interior resonance, the *corps sonore.* He describes the listening self, *resonating* with the sound and music, reflecting as a listener on the nature of subjectivity. He notes the meaning of the marking *ascoltando* which instructs performers to play whilst listening. Nancy’s rich description of the resonant body connects with the discussion below of two further features of listening to music; how bodily sensations and perceptions constellate as articulated cognition and how metaphors rooted in the body, and bodily movement provide schema for this expression. Nancy’s phenomenology links listening practices to the creation of a subject, the reflexivity of subjectivity and to the issue of other listeners. Questions that arise from these accounts ask how listening experience constellates as language and how their articulation entails an understanding of intersubjectivity. The phenomenological approach links to the questions of hermeneutics – how is it that music can be thought to create meanings. This connection can be followed in Cook (2001) *Theorising musical Meaning* and his emphasis on ‘potential meaning’ in music and by contrast with Kramer’s (2011) work, *Interpreting Music.* Kramer recognises the ambiguity between music’s non-semantic import and its possibility of finding expression in language. The interest for this project is the light the debate shines on the relationship between sensation, sense, sense-making and language that emerges from practices of listening.

3.7.***The Cultural History of Aurality.***

Sereny reminds us that listening as a cultural practice has a history and ‘regimes ‘ of listening have been established, some of which are now coming to an end. Serenzy asks ‘who has the right to music?’ as linked to these regimes of listening. His forensic examination of rights, plagarism, compilation, sampling and composition reflects Goehr’s deconstructive work (Goehr, 1992,1998) on the nature of the Musical Work. These approaches combine to open up the hitherto linear sense we have of music unfolding as interpretation to the final terminus of the audience towards a different picture of gathering interpretive acts and strategies in which the audience is far from passive***.*** These approaches link with theorists such as Johnson (2015) who have linked listening as a cultural practice to the concept of the ‘self’ and to the development of modernism. Here our exploration of listening practices reveals its scope – from the detail of phenomenological descriptions of the fine grain of experience to the arc of history. Johnson’s recent study is the latter and proposes that the study of music, and listening, from 1600 is itself a commentary on the rise of modernity. Here he charts three modalities of experience: the present and the past, and our sense of loss; the results of human culture and labour and the idea of nature; and the realms of discourse and the body. Johnson echoing Charles Taylor (Taylor. 2007) also links the processes conceptualises as ‘secularisation’ to the emergence of ‘self-positing’, ‘self-reflection’ and new modes of subjectivity. So by looking at the history of aurality as music unfolds across time we see a reflection of our changing notions of the self and our subjectivity.

3.8. ***Philosophy of Music.***

Philosophers who write about listening show how our practices and assumptions lead us to construct both meanings of music and explanations for its effects, and that these can be critically examined. Two philosophical strands are apparent. Scruton (2014) places music as a unique art form, sui generis. Pure music content comes to us as a human enterprise, intentionally constructed in a sonic world which is communicative, affective and cognitive. We engage with music as we engage with a human face, and understand it as we might unpack a metaphor. Music is not here representational of things in the world but in patterns of pure intention, relating to states of mind. Scruton is a cognitive dualist, that is, he believes that the world is shaped by our consciousness. Kivy, by contrast (Kivy, 2002), is theoretically a ‘patterned formalist’ and is wary of Scruton’s interpretive base, preferring to point to abstract patterns, shapes and contours in music. Specific personal responses, affect and meanings are recognised but explained as instances of underlying schema of cause-effect, action-motive, inference-conclusion and space-time. Here music is not representational and is a grammar and syntax with no specific semantic content.

3.9. Consistent with Kivy’s formalism Zangwill (2007) argues that music as an art-work stands alone and is not completed by its reception by the listener. These commentators raise the key questions of our listening responses and their status as authoritative interpretive understandings. Goehr also adds a new relationship between philosophy and music in her *1997 Bloch Lectures* by claiming that music’s non-linguistic ‘autonomy’ enables it to be a site of philosophical exploration itself (Goehr (1998). As in Johnson’s case of music charting historical trajectories, here, for Goehr, music is a site for philosophising.

3.10. The question of music ‘as a language’ is a key area of philosophical debate. Approaches range from Cooke (1959) who entitles his book *The Language of Music*, and speaks of the terms of a ‘musical vocabulary’ as intrinsic to music, to Johnson’s view of ‘the complex relationship of non-identity between language and music’, which sits between ‘ineffability’ (Jankelevitch, 2003) and a representational ‘aboutness’ only akin to the semantic content of language. For Johnson, music has performative, bodily, and sensuous particulars, which can be rational, self-reflective, self-critical and ironic. It imitates language in order to depart from it. These patterns of sensuous material, tones, gestures, rhythm leaves the embodied mind, and the mindful body of the listener in ‘free play’ without becoming concepts or standing for something else (Johnson, 2015). Gracyk (2013) makes a distinction between music ‘expressing emotion’ and being ‘expressive of emotion’. He concludes that there are multiple musical arts with distinct expressive functions, and these are influenced by the music’s origins in a particular cultural system of symbolic interactions and learned social preferences. For Gracyk the meaning of music is rooted in cultural practices, and anthropologists provide us with examples of this.

3.11. ***Hermeneutics and Critical Musicology.***

It is this field, where meaning is inseparable from cultural contexts, that Kramer (2011) develops his hermeneutics in music, and ‘critical musicology’. Kramer argues that meaning in and of music is now subject to ‘open interpretation’ and away from the autonomy of the Work, from structural detached observation, hard evidence and literal description towards process thinking, emergence, and performative engagement by listeners. This listening hermeneutics is generative – new responses add new narratives to the realisation of the music. Kramer also regards musical entities as being understood both as *objects* and as *things, states of affairs.* Taking this opening forward Spitzer (2004) has developed an analytic approach to our responses to music by referring to cognitive schemata and identifies these as metaphor patterns. When we speak to each other about our personal responses to music and a discourse develops this is informed and structured by the use of cognitive metaphors, of time, place, centre, periphery, path, journey, and growth. Spitzer’s view is that hearing ‘as’ entails the musical world we listen to being re-realised in our imaginative constructions of that sonic world by the same metaphorical constructions that we use to construct our life-world. Spitzer links the elements of music to this model of metaphor use: harmony is linked to visuality; rhythm is linked to language; and melody and organic life. This reminds us that our descriptions of meaning and significance of music will entail fine-grained observation of the complex interplay of the elements of music: rhythm, harmony, melody, timbre, atmosphere, place/time, and gesture as music.

3.12. ***Conceptual and Intra-musical Silence.***

Silence is often neglected when specifying the elements of music. Jankelevitch (2003) in his *Music and the Ineffable* suggests that silence is the ground of music, the screen, it’s origin, and that music, in its spatio-temporality, subsists within silence as presence/absence which has an eschatological dimension. Jeremy Begbie has developed a theological approach to listening, to the role of silence, spatio-temporality, the ineffable and to ‘theopoesis’ through music. Voegelin (2010) in *Listening to Noise and Silence* notes, echoing Nancy, that silence is reflective and encompassing, taking into itself everything that is audible, to echo back to the listener their own listening engagement. Intra-musical silences are of critical significance and have multiple contextual meanings. Mahler’s request for breaks and silence, the increasing silences in Faure’s music over time and the conceptual and performative terminus of Cage’s 4’33’’ are all examples of the place of silence in music. In performance, silence is in the hands of the conductor/animateur who is the sensitive boundary manager between all forms of silence and music: precursory, anticipatory, intra-musical, and ending silence.

3.13. ***Anthropology.***

The discipline of Anthropology, the perspective from which this proposal comes, adds to this overview of the listening literature in two ways. First it reminds us in specific detail that, for example, listening to Balinise Gamelan music, to Indian Ragas, to dervish music, and to ritual chant all entail radically different ways of listening and ways of conceptualising cultural listening practices. Expression, emotion and communicative intent (for example self-expression by composers, conductors and players) is problematized in these cross-cultural examples. Second it draws our attention to the *habitus* in which we learn to listen and which structures our discursive patterns of expression. It reminds us of the ritual, social aspects of audience participation, of the nature of the live event, of the way in which we are attuned to the event and the music in embodied ways. It notes also the way in which the audience in the live event constitutes that event, and that the inter-subjectivity of co-presence, and co-sentience with others, is part of this habitus. The interpretive task of the listeners is implicated here in the full realisation of the event which comprises the communicative acts of composition, conducting and performance by players.

3.14. ***The Ethos of Music.***

Finally we must refer to areas of musical engagement that we might call applications, learning and therapy. There are activities in cultural life to which music is applied as a kind of enhancement, often with subliminal effects. The mood music of lifts, department stores, and waiting rooms requires us to hear without listening. Listening can be the focus of learning and therapy, and Hallam (2015) has conducted a meta-analysis of research findings across a range of activities, including intellectual development, spatial reasoning, mathematical performance and creativity. Daniel Barenboim (2007) is particularly sensitive in making links between music, its performance, its contexts and it meanings which keep distinct, and honour the intrinsically musical dimensions yet allowing meanings, both persona and political, to flow from and co-exist with the musical event. Scruton in his book *Soul of the World* ascribes a moral dimension to listening to music; Nancy regards listening as constitutive of the reflective self; Johnson considers that aurality, regimes of listening, mark cultural progress; and Bourdieu refers to ‘ethos’ as the virtuous relations that discourse on music listening enables.

3.15. These initial observations on the literature on listening show the scope of the interdisciplinary background materials which will enable an exploration of the kind I am proposing. Each of these perspectives is explored in more detail in the sections below. I now suggest a theoretical model for the project.

**4. A Theoretical Model for Ethnographic Research into Listening to Live Music Performance.**

4.1. The intention of this section is to produce a theoretical anthropological model to:

a. Support ethnographic research into practices of listening to live musical performance.

b. Support a hermeneutic analysis of musical interpretation by mapping an aesthetic discourse.

The model links the elements that create live musical events in a hermeneutic circle. The focus is on the listening audience, its experience, and its members’ interpretive perspectives. The listening, embodied audience is characterised in terms of its capacity to ‘compose’ itself and to develop, through disciplines of listening, by moving from sense to signification, diverse and rich interpretive perspectives of the live music event, and to function as co-creators in the realisation of the music event. The ethnographic accounts that can be derived from auditors can be explicated by drawing on the theoretical model outlined here.

4.2. The broad questions are: What are the elements that are dynamically related in a live music performance? What are these relations? What conditions of possibility are created by their interaction for three domains:

A. Listening as an embodied cultural practice: the audience members’ personal listening practices and repertoire.

B. Interpretation and meaning-making: how live music is interpreted and understood to have significance and meaning for listeners.

C.Personal listening and meaning-making, interpretive strategies and shared aesthetic appreciation: how ‘convergent’ are shared aesthetic judgements as compared with the multiplicity of personal responses to music?

4.3. The model identifies a series of ‘compositional relations’ that are entailed in the realisation of an imagined sonic world: which in its full realisation is dialogic ‘co-composition’.

This can be summarised initially in a graphic of 7 domains:

Fig. 1. A Hermeneutic Circle.

Cultural

Sedimentation

Creative

Imagination

Prefigurement

Embodiment

Reflection

Experience

Realisation

We can fill out the dynamic processes and the outcomes in relation to each of these domains:

FIG.1a.

CULTURAL RECORDINGS, CRITICS/ REPUTATION

SEDIMENTATION AESTHETIC MEMORY

REFLECTION ARTICULATION/ ETHNOGRAPHY

DISCURSIVE SHARING MUSIC POETICS

EXPERIENCE LISTENING, PERCEPTION/ SENSE/MEANING

HEARING, COGNITION.

REALISATION PERFORMANCE/ EVENT

LISTENING AUDIENCE, HABITUS

PREFIGUREMENT SCORE/CONDUCTOR REIMAGINATION

A ‘READING’

EMBODIMENT ANIMATEUR/PERFORMERS REHEARSING

‘SUBJECT POSITION’

IMAGINATION CREATIVITY/COMPOSING COMPOSITION/SCORE

OUTCOME

OUTCOME

PROCESS

RELATION

DOMAIN

Macintosh HD:Users:huw:Library:Containers:com.apple.mail:Data:Library:Mail Downloads:D3DDB102-D13F-4FCD-B37D-8E006627DC8D:Diagram.pdf

4.4. These conceptual models are intended to show dynamic elements which are non-linear, they are cumulative and overlap in practice [[4]](#footnote-4). Figure 2. provides a map of the territory and the specific elements H-N which this paper explores.

A. Represents a composer’s creative imagination of a sonic world and its composition.

B. Represents the production of a text ‘score’ a ‘work’, which symbolically represents some but not all aspects of the imagined sonic world. This relation opens up the practical interpretive problem of ‘originals’, of sources, of differing editions and the problems of authorial intent (Kramer 2011). The problem of composer ‘intentionality’ and the relationship to the ‘score’ raises not only an ontological question concerning the identity of a of a musical ‘work’ (Goehr, 2007) but also the debate concerning the very possibility of a composer intention separate from the written score. This therefore challenges claims to interpretive authority based on an ability to intuit an intention that is not the symbolic score. some commentators have questioned this interpretive manoeuvre [[5]](#footnote-5). Nevertheless in practice the hermeneutic question of what the composer/composition ‘means’, and what sources of reference are open to conductors in particular in addressing this problem remains of active concern. The intuited intentionality of the composer may not be the primary source for an interpretation of the art-work. The artist may have made an art-work which stands, as it were independently, as a possible state of affairs and statement about the human condition. The interpretation of this art work may not be best determined by recourse to some notion of intentionality or self-expresssion.

C. Represents the interpretive task of the animateur in both resolving the questions raised in the relation between A & B and also making decisions about the forces and instrumentation available for performance, issues of time place, context and ‘event’ as well as the fine–grained matters of tempi, pauses, pace, accents and many more that are the stuff of the exploration of rehearsal, and subject to his/ her symbolic gestural repertoire. The animateur is also the manager of silence and certain ritual functions. Critically the conductor/animateur proffers his/her own interpretation of the music by creating a ‘subject position’ for the listeners.

D. Represents historic sources of ‘readings’.

E. Represents the gestural and codified communicative repertoire of the conductor. See in particular Williams (forthcoming).

F. Represents the creation of a ‘Subject-Position’ proffered to the listening audience by the combination of the ‘reading’ of the score, management of musical resources, and embodied gestures, all embodied by the animateur/conductor.

G. Represents the performance system. This contains variable of forces and skills, and the balance between these variables and mimesis (following the notation) and animation (creative realisation of the conductors reading) this creating the performance and the proffered ‘Subject-Position’ to the listening audience.

H. Represents the corporate listening audience and its ‘habitus’. The audience as a social system constituting participant, ritualising actors, ‘composing’ themselves, and re-imagining the art-work.

I. Represents the live music Event.

J. Represents the Listeners’ repertoire of auditory play.

K. Represents the shifting and gestalt points and episodes of fit between listeners’ perception and cognition.

L. Represents emergent sense-making of patterns and structures reflecting musical elements and informed by both listening repertoire and by received cultural aesthetics.

M. Represents articulations and expressions of musical experience and understanding.

N. Represents an implicit and muted shared aesthetic discourse flowing from the specific musical event.

O. Represents forms of memory, recordings, music critics’ texts, reviews, and forms of N above.

This second graphic, Fig. 2. enables us to have a comprehensive map of the territory being covered in this paper and also to see where ‘interpretation’ in its various senses takes place, and how these points are spread through the process. It also allows us to see how the hermeneutic circle maps onto the anthropological model in the relationships between the elements shown in Figures 1 and 1a.

4.5. I have sketched here a hermeneutic circle and a provisional map, which will assist orientation in reading this proposal. I now return to the central questions being raised, and the possibilities of addressing them. I do this through a series of essays which take forward an interdisciplinary review of the literature on listening.

**5. Listening to Live Music: Can We Hear the Audience?**

It will generally be admitted that Beethoven’s Fifth Symphony is the most sublime noise that has ever penetrated the ear of man. All sorts of conditions are satisfied with it. Whether you are like Mrs. Munt, and tap surreptitiously when the tune comes ­– of course, not to disturb the others ­; or like Helen, who can see heroes and shipwrecks in the music’s flood; or like Margaret, who can only see the music, or like Tibby, who profoundly versed in counterpoint, and holds the full score open on his knee…(E. M. Forster, *Howards End*.)

Jessica: *I am never merry when I hear sweet music*

Lorenzo: *The reason is, your spirits are attentive*

(Shakespeare *The Merchant of Venice*)

5.1. So Kivy (1990) and Rosen (2010) respectively introduce their works on music. The audience in both cases however then conveniently fades from view. It is of anthropological interest to notice a gap in our cultural discourses. Accounts of listening to music constellate at two extremes. The musically literate, technical critic, at one end (for example: Radio 4’s *CD Review*, and Press coverage of concerts and program notes) and the highly personal associative links with musical pieces which absorbs the music wholly into a life narrative (for example: the appropriation of music in this way in the accounts on Radio 4’s *Desert Island Discs*)*.* There are many gradations in between for example, performers and teachers of music who listen at concerts with a certain ‘ear’ as auditors, nevertheless a significant space exists here in which the audience is mute.This is also anthropologically an undertheorised space which appears between the disciplines of musicology, the teaching and application of theory of music, ethnomusicology, social psychology, philosophy, which all have well-developed literatures on music. This cultural and research *epoche* has also been noted by those who wonder why there is an appreciative public for abstract art and yet a reluctant and sometimes confused audience for contemporary ‘difficult’ classical music (Stubbs, 2009)*.* What may open up when we survey the ranks of concert-goers may be accounts of engagement with live music that I will call *music poetics*. This be gathered, composed, through the anthropological approach of ‘*ethnographies of listening’*.[[6]](#footnote-6) I go further and suggest that *Active Listening Events* might be designed to enable listening practices to flourish, and that this relationship between the ‘work’ and its audience realises the music as imaginative ‘recomposition’ by listeners. I suggest that the existence of this *epoche* is partly to do with the absence of a available, legitimate and permissive ‘vocabulary’ that is not wholly remedied by music theory, musicology or program notes ­– analogies might be the challenges of speaking of abstract art, landscape or wine.[[7]](#footnote-7)

5.2. Szendy in his book, *Listen. A History of Our Ears* (2008) examines how the modernist regime of listening was established. He refers, as many commentators do, to the work of Adorno (1989). He claims that Adorno identified several strands and forces in listening regimes and also reinforced a hierarchical view of listening. So, formal analysis through music theory, the ideas of the Work, the idea of exact replication, and the emergence of ‘abolute’[[8]](#footnote-8) instrumental music all contribute to a regime of listening that he calls ‘structural’. Here there is a sense of having to listen to and comprehend the whole in its plenitude. This is a ‘functional’ listening that eschews all comings and going of memory, distraction and appropriation and becomes a function of the work, building up a synthesis from the immediate analysis of complexities. This produces the ‘expert listener’ and in a hierarchical gradient then the ‘good listener’ who:

Hears beyond musical details, makes connections spontaneously…but he is not ware of the technical and structural implications, having unconsciously mastered its immanent logic, he understands music about the way we understand our own language even though virtually or wholly ignorant of it grammar and syntax. (Szendy, 2008:103).

5.3. Szendy suggests, from Adorno, that this idea of ‘fallen’ listening, a degraded form of ‘structural’ listening produces a regime in which listening is ‘to understand everything or nothing’. This ‘all or nothing’ listening turns into the polarity of aesthetics and entertainment. Szendy suggests that auditory interpretation at work may include inattention, wavering, ‘lacunary’ listening, and attention to silence. Listening is not necessarily about aiming to restore a ‘hiddden program’ or a ‘narrativity’ that underlie the work and must be rediscovered. He suggests that meanings proliferate in all senses, semantic, graphic, optical, allegorical, literal and literary. Reflexive listening is learning to listen to oneself but ‘placticity’ in listening is to develop a repertoire. This recognises the ‘work’ but mediated by the way in which the work is always an ‘arrangement’. Here Szendy uses a forensic example of the way in which copy-write, plagiarism, quotation, compilation and arranging have worked to mask the multiplicity of the ‘work’.

We are not a community of listeners listening to one single object that joins us together….we are an infinite addition of singularities that each wants to make itself heard hearing…we do not listen like one body.(Szendy, 2008:143)

Linking this perspective to the digitisation of music and our ability to offer hearing to others, to shuffle and to arrange, Szendy suggests that we as listeners seek a space in which to make music our own, to appropriate it but also with a desire that in our listening (which entails adapting, arranging) we might transmit our hearing to others. Discourse, inter-subjectivity and sociality through listening is therefore achieved though these processes, which give weight to the listener, the interpretations, the arrangements, the work and the event as a complex nexus of forces, rather than to the singularity of the work, to formalism in analysis or to the kind of focussed listening to the totality that Adorno calls ‘structural’. Listening is in Szendy’s approach part of a creative and generative process and well informs the approach taken here.

5.4. So there are a number of features of ‘listener as an audience’ that ask for our attention:

1. That the audience is mute and treated in a linear framework of ‘production and consumption’ as ‘consumers’ the terminus or receptacle *for the interpretations of others*.

2. That the audience is active in listening and sense making and that these interpretive processes both personal and social represent the full realisation of the live musical art-work.

3. As a caveat to 2 above I suggest that in using a hermeneutic circle as an interpretive framework, and placing the audience in it as a realisation of the art-work, I do not imply that the expressed experiences of the audience function as some kind of ‘feed-back loop’. This would be to reinforce the paradigm rejected in 1 above. A better metaphor would be that the audience experience and expression and aesthetic discourse are reverberations, remembered sound ripples on a pool.

3. That there are a range of listening practices and disciplines and these can be developed as a repertoire, not just as an informed analytic ‘ear’ but as modes of engagement. The consequence of this is that responses to music, when articulated, do not have to be comprehensive, in the structural sense of offering an interpretation of the whole in analytic terms.

4. That the audience is a social system of ritualising actors, composing themselves in co-sentience/co-presence and that in this habitus systemic atmospheres and dynamics are created. This feature also contains and masks an implicit aesthetic discourse.

5. That listening and sense-making create resonant meanings in listeners and that these can be made explicit, captured in *ethnographies of listening* and expressed in an emergent genre of *music poetics*.

6. That when the materials in 5. above are shared, in a designed *Active Listening Event,* an aesthetic discourse and ways of talking about music will emerge and enhance both listening practices and sense-making.

7. Charting listening processes, articulations and shared aesthetics may show a shape of personal multiplicity in interpretation and appropriation (divergence), followed by a realignment of these patterns in core, shared, metaphorical expressions of aesthetic (convergence). I have noted the theoretical implications of this above.

5.5. The first two features are assertions. The others are open to more empirical enquiry. That the accounts in item 5. will be subjective is not in doubt, and I shall discuss Kramer’s work on ‘subjectivity’ below. In item 4. I note that concert-going is a social event. The inter-subjective, connectivity amongst auditors I theorise below as co-presence (Giddens, 1994) and co-sentience (Eco, 1995). These features of group-life are ways in which the audience as ritualising actors constitutes a social system, a *habitus* (Bourdieu, 19990). Listeners ‘compose’ themselves and take part in ways that can be understood as having features of ‘ritual’. Listening with others creates an inter-subjective sense and atmosphere, a ‘gatheredness’ and entrainment. These systemic features of audiences as groups, social systems, leads to the possible patterning (Spitzer, 2004) of the aesthetic discourse that is implicit and systemic to the auditing group. The discourse I envisage emerging though listeners’ accounts and ethnographies is a *music poetics.* To avoid the twin dangers of the emergence of a new listening ‘elitism’, or a simplistic pedagogic notion of utility I suggest that this envisaged exploration does indeed involve potential learning and new forms of engagement but within a creative ‘recompositional’ process by auditors. This may also draw on Scruton’s views on the life-enhancing and even moral dimension of listening to music. The exploration, to be participatory and democratic, requires both the validation of initial reactions and notions of pleasure and entertainment and the possibility of deepened responsive (re)engagement via the shared understandings gained from articulation of experience in the light of new ways of listening.

5.6. A cursory review of music critics’ and program note authors’ output shows some of the possibilities. In what are often formulaic accounts critics usually allow themselves a short paragraph in their pieces in which they begin to speak of the embodied experience of listening to the music they are reviewing. Words such as ‘driving’, ‘primitive’, ‘vestigal’, ‘exuberant’, emerge, there are ‘wry notes’, ‘ghosts’, ‘expressive centres of gravity’. ‘dark brooding worlds’, ‘colours’ and ‘textures’ appear, the music has ‘sensuality’, ‘austerity’ and ‘yearns erotically…’ and sometimes is chided for ‘skirting real depth of feeling’. Here we have a bridging vocabulary that connects formal descriptions of such matters as intonation, contrapuntal phrasing, style, historical reference and performers’ interpretive skill, and such like, with the embodied experience of the listener. This kind of material is short and underdeveloped ­– it is a muted discourse. It is agreed that music is ‘expressive’ the question being raised here is not only how is it expressive (in Scruton’s terms how is music ‘understood’) but does that expression extend, co-creatively, through the articulations of listeners, and if so how?

5.7. There is an increasing interest in engaging more listeners and a wider demographic with classical and modern classical music. Some of the interest in Simon Rattle’s appointment to the LSO has concerned his ability to reach out to a listenership and engage them in new ways. The muted audience, concert-goers, does have a narrow demographic and a Warwick University Report into the arts published in 2015 notes that the wealthiest, best educated and least-ethically diverse 8% of the population account for 44% of all attendances at live music. Furthermore if they are ‘collaborating’ with composers it is with a group of creative people whose average earnings are £3,700 pa. from their music (Sound and Music 2014). Stubbs wonders why the ‘cash starved world of avant garde music…and conceptual art’s idealism has washed up on the exclusive, sun-kissed shores of elitism’ (Stubbs, 2009:134).

5.8. The idea that the audience has an interpretive, re-compositional role, and is part of the completion of a hermeneutic circle from ‘composer/work-score-performance-conducting and performance skill and interpretation ­– through the ‘event’ to the listening audience’ is not uncontested. Zangwill (2007), for example, directly challenges audience-based reception theories, asserting that *‘there should be no reference to an audience in a theory of the essential nature of art’* (Zangwill, 2007:128) and Kivy, one of the most articulate philosophers of music suggest at the end of *Music Alone* that:

..to put an interpretation on a piece of music alone is to close oneself off from one of the most satisfying and engrossing experiences the arts have to offer us. I dare say there are many people who cannot enjoy pure instrumental music at all, since what they enjoy is not the work of pure music but another work of interpreted music which they have produced in collaboration with the composer. Perhaps pure instrumental music is caviar to the general. I guess I really think it is. But if that conclusion comes across as being intolerably elitist. Let me add in amelioration, that caviar is, after all, an acquired taste (Kivy, 1990:201).

5.9. A research project precisely requires the centrality of conflicting theories in order to create the challenge to refine an empirical exploration which can allow the exploration of the explanatory value of those theories. This approach therefore begins with an exploration into the phenomenology of *listening* and its relationship to the substantive interpretive expression of what is *heard* – a phenomenological distinction between process and content developed by Nancy (2007). We shall also explore such listening disciplines where interpretation is eschewed, that entail ‘negative capability’, being ‘without memory or desire’ (Bion, 1985) and adopting a posture of ‘intentional unintentionality’ (Humphrey and Laidlaw 2009). It is precisely the relation between such ‘emptiness’ and ‘open receptivity’ to music and the reflective development of a vocabulary and a discourse about experiences that is of interest. This entails exploring the tension – as evidenced by the writings of Kivy and Stubbs – between an enhanced appreciation of what Kivy disparagingly calls the ‘garden-variety’ emotions, a democratisation enabled by some kind of learning, and the hierarchy of sensibilities that Kivy supposes resides only in an informed elite. So here are three elements of interest about the muted audience: how they acquire and deploy their disciplines of listening; their frameworks of articulating the meanings of music; and the aesthetic discourse that emerges when sharing their experiences.

5.10. There is a tendency to link the use of the word ‘aesthetic’ to matters of value and judgement, and this itself leads towards hierarchical codification of discourse into what are then regarded as closed and authoritative discourses that legitimate the power of their users by the further development of technical vocabulary (Foucault, 1995). This paper proposes that we might be able to research these elements ethnographically and do so by charting patterns of experience in *Active Listening Events* and this is a dialogic, egalitarian approach to aesthetics, and a participatory, dialogic methodology.

5.11. These quotations from Zangwill and Kivy do raise some philosophical questions about the nature of the art-work and the relationship it might have with the audience via the conductor. The ontology, autonomy, of the art-work has been the subject of Goehr’s research. However aesthetic security cannot be achieved by shifting the locus of interpretive authority to the ‘subject-position’ proffered by the conductor. Especially if this is done on the basis of an equally problematic supposition that there exists an ‘intentionality’ of the composer, knowable to the interpreter, that is extrinsic to the art-work in its symbolic form – in this case the score. Kivy raises the key question of what is warranted in interpretation if one is claiming to be ‘true’ to the art-work, conceived as autonomous in Zangwill’s sense. An anthropological approach will consider a more relationally dynamic and active set of relations which entail interpretive concepts such as *habitus* and *disposition* (Bourdieu, 1990), *knowledge practices* (Jackson,1996), and will raise issues concerning cultural relativism and universality in listening practices and in theories of emotion and arousal (Becker, 2010). The elements for such an anthropological[[9]](#footnote-9) view are:

a) concert-going to *events* of live instrumental music;

b) co-presence and co-sentience with other listeners;

c) a set of audience conventions with aspects of conformity and the effects of ‘ritualisation’ by those participating;

d) the deployment of *practices of listening*;

e) the implicit/explicit *schema* which frame *interpretation* and *meaning* and what Roger Scruton calls *understanding* of music.

Kramer notes the rich possibilities of seeking these interpretations and suggests why they may use language in interesting ways as *music poetics*:

Interpreting music is a symbolic means of giving the impossible account, found not by overcoming but by lingering with the music’s inexpressible remainders and the gaps that meaning must (but never can) fill. These gaps involve both concepts, which are deferred and the significance of particulars, which is established largely in retrospect. The gaps are a kind of silence in which music, paradoxically is at its most eloquent. Even the simplest interpretation of a work or event rapidly exceeds anything that might conceivably be encoded in the music’s stylistic and structural gestures. And because music, even vocal music cannot ‘speak’ for itself, its exposure of the gaps between sound and meaning is particularly merciless. (Kramer, 2011:50).

5.12. Can we imagine what the raw material of *music poetics* might look like? An example of how emergent and rich this discourse might be was illustrated in the recent joint exploration between the St Andrews University Music Centre and NVA Glasgow. In sampling various pieces and sharing responses a rich and informative vocabulary was generated, which enabled a functionally creative focus on event design. Another example came in a response to a musical source ­– John Hopkins *Collider (Immunity)* 2014. <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=3wAnxUtCzPQ>. This was suggested as a piece that might be effective in the acoustic space of the ‘ruin’ (the setting for the event) because of its qualities, those aspects aside, it is the attempt at descriptions of musical qualities that is of interest here:

Response A:

……..this track rips across time…

it could create a good hard edge for a looped industrial motif cutting across the space sharply from vault to vault….

Response B:

*I felt moved through a number of planes, points and phases –*

*\* sketch/scratch– a sluice opens a pulsed flow…….*

*\* the ground upon which we stand/move is established……...*

*\* Slice/stroke/strike starts to morph into a shuffle, the footfall/glide of multiple steps………..*

*\* A shape of presence asks for a turning ear, it becomes the environing sound-weather and eludes an aural image/ gaze……but it is there...*

*\* Something chokes catching the throat, a gulp, a beaded rosary-rattle is gone and a ‘note’ appears and develops its counterpoint – a suspension (oscillation of two notes, harmonic/enharmonic) an alternation is established and is enveloped in a soft explosion……...*

*\* An alternation seeks yet another and all alternatives meld into a falling siren, coalescing everything that is around it, gathering so that nothing cannot be incorporated……*

*\* Another rising which also has its falling, and its unresolvedness keeps the struggle of forces from settling to a state or stasis……….*

*\* \*\*\*an almost silent caesura, almost a break, is the point of refusal, and of the impossibility of refusal, the point at which all sound is sucked away to a point of light and the pulse stops, but not fatally…..*

*\*The pulse returns, for this is what you are resonating……*

*\*An upsertive theme webs any substance about it but…..*

*\*nevertheless many voices are perceptible in the textured beat…..*

*\* Thinning out, sharpened in some slice of light we might be turning for home…*

*\* which turns out to be all the way down in the deep steps of leaving only this way….*

*\*the residue shower of dust falls over all our footprints .*

5.13. What this raw material illustrates is that auditors produce a rich metaphorical vocabulary as Spitzer (2004) suggests they will. The language is fractured, even ungrammatical, and illustrates the way in which embodied resonance to music shapes the response (Nancy, 2007). Metaphor is not only an interpretive mode of making meaning, as if it were an elaboration on top of the basic literality and correspondence between words and things in language. Harris (2000) shows how, in evolutionary terms, in child development and adult decision-making the imaginative function of metaphor has cognitive power in enabling causal explanations, spatio-temporal conceptualization and decision-making. In music, metaphor is not limited to the interpretive province of the performers, conductor and audience as a description of composition from the composer Ligeti illustrates:

Sonorous planes and masses which interpenetrate, merge and alternate with one another, hovering networks which tear and become entangled, wet sticky, gelatinous, fibrous, dry, brittle, grainy and compact materials, all kinds of snatches and snippet, scraps and splinters, imaginary buildings, labyrinths, inscriptions and texts, dialogues, insects, events, processes, blendings, transformations an catastrophes, disintegration and disappearance – all of these are elements of this non-purist music. (Minors, 2013:176).

Ligeti’s metaphors have been subject to analysis by Lobanova (2002). This example stands as a compositional ‘mirror image’ use of metaphor to Spitzer’s (2004) reception theory of the role of metaphor in listening to and understanding music. Music is from conception to audition inescapably metaphoric once it takes the form of language.

5.14. Embodied listening and metaphoric expression are closely related here. There is no development to final meaning in this raw material, although a narrative movement is apparent. The attributions of meaning will merge when a setting is created in which they can emerge, and this will be the basis of the *Active Listening Events* the creation of a setting for the development of a shared aesthetic discourse. This example shows an attempt to generate a vocabulary which provides an initial reaction and begins a process of interpersonal reflection and response – the generation of a potentially enriching social discourse. Kramer (2011) notes two features of this process. First that it sits creatively in the necessary gap between music’s *structural grammar/syntax* and its *semantic emptiness/openness,* and second, that these subjective responses, which create the possibility of shared diversity, create the conditions for the possibility of the *self-making of the subject* – the reflective listener. The way in which these ‘metaphor showers’ can constellate into a *musical poetics* and are not subjective free-association of personal meanings but reflect the intrinsic musical elements of timbre/tonality, rhythm, harmony and melody is fully explored in Michael Spitzer’s major exploration in *Metaphor and Musical Thought* (Spitzer, 2004), and I will discuss his work later.

5.15. If we are able to document this creative way of engaging with music we might also be able to focus on the listening by participants and in relation to other elements present. This I imagine as *participatory listening.* In doing so we might be able to explore what happens when we move away from the paradigm case of the ‘stationary-audience-in-concert-hall’ convention. In order to do this we might adopt a research approach to *listening.* We might do this in two complementary ways. First by deploying an anthropological ethnographic methodology to gather accounts from listeners, and use the theoretical framework outlined here to seek, and make explicit, interpretive patterns and strategies used by listeners. Second, by designing *Active Listening Events* that may provide a reflexive way in which the arts and disciplines of listening can be explored. This in turn may create new forms of engagement with music and have an impact on participation in music events that can also be mapped and explored.

5.16. It is important, even though I want to treat the audience as a social system, to avoid essentialising the audience or to suppose an image of a particular kind of ‘Clapham Omnibus’ listener. As Szendy remind us we are not one body of listeners at an event. Audiences comprise composers, performers, conductors, and listeners of many and various levels of musical knowledge, and different ages. It is therefore an open question to be addressed in the research to explore whether ethnographically captured patterns emerge among certain sub-groups of listeners. It would be possible, a part of the research strategy that under a *Listening Seminar* particular focus groups. Composers, conductors, performers and listeners could be created. It is also important to make explicit an assumption that might arise as to the purpose and utility of such research. It is the case that Kramer and Scruton and others do suggest that there are developmental, moral, and ‘self/subject reflexivity’ aspects and possible consequences of understanding music as music. This simply points to the co-existence of different and diverse ways in which music is experienced and suggests that certain practices and knowledge may enhance the experience and it meaning. This raises the question of whether it is possible to engage in an aesthetic discourse without resorting to a hierarchical view of appreciation as Kivy seems to do. Whilst there are analytic distinctions that can be made between for example: perception and cognition; between experience and reflection; between reactions and responses; these should not structure too definitively our enquiry into the accounts that listeners may give to their engagement with live music. As I suggest in my model of *Auditory Play* we must keep open, and not categorically limit, modes of perception, cognition, reflexive meta-cognition, interpretation and aesthetic discourse. We can be confident that there will be many ways of listening reported and diverse constructions of significance and meaning arising; mapping and documenting these is the basis of the research. Music may give pleasure, entertainment, stimulate memory and associations, produce wonder or puzzlement, fear and delight and the starting point for our purposes is to accept the *validity* of accounts of these experiences, not to assign them to a hierarchical taxonomy based on ‘skill’ or ‘taste’.

5.17. Empiricist social scientists may be tempted to construct such a scenario in terms of experimental design and look for evidence of ‘change over time’ by the introduction of certain variables (eg. ‘better informed’ listeners report ‘more/better enjoyment’ or ‘more sophisticated meaning and associations’) and this may be accompanied by an unexamined assumption that this counts as ‘improvement’. This anthropological research may indeed lead to the creation of contexts for discursive aesthetic exchange as part of its methodology but the development of an aesthetic discourse – sharing ethnographies of listening between auditors – does not entail the *objective* of betterment in either the sense of self-improvement or of intellectual proficiency, or deploy an experimental design that valourises change in certain variables as indicators of learning. It will however value the likely effects of discourse – learning about other responses and generating ways of talking about music.

**6. Power and Meaning in Music.**

The music of Mozart, we are told, lowers the blood pressure, raises the pain threshold, and strengthens the immune system. His sublime compositions render school pupils more attentive and dairy cows more productive. Modern shoppers unconsciously adjust their purchasing patterns in response to the types of music played in supermarkets, and it has been reported that vandalism on the Newcastle Metro was recently reduced by broadcasting classical music, particularly Delius….(Marsh,2010)

6.1. We can begin to ask how music can be understood and have meaning by considering how music is thought to have both its power and then how its meanings are created by listeners. Many disciplines have contributions to make: acoustics and the phenomenology of sound (Ihde, 2007); cognitive science (Demasio 2000); social and applied psychology of music (North and Hargreaves, 2008); philosophy (Kivy,1990, 1995), Scruton, 1997, 2009, 2014); and hermeneutics (Kramer 2011). Specialist studies of ‘emotion’ in music have been gathered in Juslin and Sloboda’s major study (2010) and the field of ‘experimental aesthetics’ uses the two parallel theories; *arousal theories* and *prototypical theories*, and a *composite theory*, a ‘reciprocal feedback model’ by North & Hargreaves, 2008). The discourses of hermeneutics and aesthetics within an anthropological approach are however much wider and more culturally varied than the philosophical and research discourses, as I shall illustrate below. This project attempts to explore new sources of engagement with music to add to that diversity.

6.2. Spitzer (2004) has set out a detailed theory of musical meaning, and the key role of metaphor within it, which fills out, semantically, the deterministic features of social psychological theories. This theory attempts to bridge the space between music’s grammar/syntax and its expressive and cognitive semantic and interpretive content – ­ how emergent, transformations take place in the elision of sensation and sense-making, music’s autonomic power and personal and collective meaning. Spitzer deploys Kant’s theory of *schema* and develops on top of that, so to speak, the properties of metonymy and metaphor, in both their cognitive and expressive uses. In this he draws on the theory of Lakoff and Johnson (1998). He then links isomorphically the elements of music, *harmony, rhythm,* and *melody* to a series of metaphors. This theory suggests that we might see motifs, patterns, constellations and configurations of expression and interpretive meaning emerging in ethnographic accounts of listening. The theory is useful because it allows the *Auditory Play* that I theorise characterises the phenomenology of listening, to provide from that practice repertoire, ‘raw’ material for interpretation which is structured by these schema and metaphors but not determined by them.

6.3. Berlyne’s work (1971, 1972, 1974) is a psychobiological approach which concentrates on stimulus patterns and arousal. He establishes a relationship between the familiarity and complexity of the music, the level of arousal and the aesthetic preference for it. A parallel and competing theory (Martindale and Moore, 1988) is based on the view that listeners have existing cognitive representations, prototypes, which they deploy to asses the complexity of music. There are detailed studies of aspects of anticipation, and expectation in listening (Huron, 2007). Huron develops a typology of five expectation-related emotional response systems: *an imaginative response; a tension response; a prediction response, a reaction response and an appraisal response*. He further develops these in a time order model.

6.4. There is therefore a growing literature in the social psychology of music. Hallam (2015) provides a research synthesis analysing findings on the power of music on the intellectual, social and personal development of children and young people including the effects of music on aural perception, language skills, aural and visual skills, spatial reasoning and on creativity – the latter being linked with opportunities for improvisation.

6.5. What emerges from this cursory overview is that there is a developing literature and research base concerning explanations for the effects of music on listeners, and at the other end of the spectrum there are studies of the beneficial applications of music for different groups of people. All these are approaches dominated by motives and outcomes of explanation or utility. They are generally essentially reductive in their methods and conclusions, but with the important exceptions of Scruton, Kramer and Spitzer whose works open up the hermeneutic issues which will be central to my explorations. There remains however a space, a gap, and *epoche* for the exploration of meaning and creativity as it appears in the listener, and in the social system of listeners, as audience, when listening to live music – that is the substantive expressions listeners give of their experiences of participation. I theorise that this approach, complementary to the disciplines noted above, can: draw on the exploration of knowledge practices from an anthropological standpoint; consider phenomenologically the practices of listening, and supported by the philosophical approach of hermeneutics, gather ethnographic accounts of listening which can be shared in, and constitute, an aesthetic discourse. This approach may draw on the theories and explanations from other disciplines, as interesting explication (but falling short of an explaining ‘away’) and indeed join with some utility theories in that such action/participatory research (sharing aesthetic preferences) may actually change and enhance those preferences, and add repertoire to future accounts. There is both anthropological theory (Bourdieu (1971) and research evidence (Hargreaves, 1986) that ‘taste culture’ and ‘taste publics’ are emergent from the influences of such shared discourses. I refer to this feature as a convergent aesthetics.

6.6. An example of a produced version of such aesthetic discourse could be heard in Radio 4’s *Soul Music*, where the Bach Cello Suite No.1 in G Major was used to open up a rich variety of responses. What this showed was the rich vocabulary that is generated when listeners, performers and teachers share their experiences of a piece of instrumental music. It was described by Stephen Isserlis as a ‘constant opening’, producing new fascination in each rendition over time. A ‘cello teacher’ spoke of its ‘fluidity’ and the way in which pupils find their way into the music and that this need not be guided by a given interpretation. Further discussion linked the physical production of the sound, the open strings of the instrument, to the quality of resonance that is felt by the listener. Other sources of understanding came from an association of the name Bach with a ‘brook’ and the sound of water and the creation of metaphor was developed by all the contributors: the piece ‘tells and story’ it is ‘ringing’ and ‘rising’ as if ‘giving new life, birth and joy’. Later contributors told of its significance in their lives and the associations it creates. This is an example of a highly produced radio program, nevertheless it points to the possibility of more local spontaneous shared aesthetic discourses as envisaged in this paper.

6.7. So it may be possible to work with the tension between the epistemology, the listening ‘how’ of music’s power, and the hearing ’what’ of music, its hermeneutics, the way substantive interpretations emerge, are discovered, created and recomposed by listeners. There will always be a temptation to seek certainty and comprehensiveness rather than to stay with tension and incompleteness. There will always be temptations: to seek reductive biological explanations, like arousal theories; to seek analogous explanations inherent to musical sounds – the intrinsic ‘meaning’ of certain chords, intervals or keys; to engage in structural, formalistic and analytical listening in order to give an account of the art-work as a totality; to reduce all listening aesthetic judgements to an incommensurable solipsism or to an infinite pluralism of entertainment. An anthropological ethnographic, phenomenological approach is enquiring in the wider discursive space that these approaches enclose, yet with sufficient rigour that endless reportage of ad hominem descriptions can be avoided, and patterns in inter-subjective accounts discerned.

6.8. Aesthetic discourse concerns the value of art-works and the reflective experience of engaging with them. Our cultural context, our listening habitus shapes our notions and responses and even provides pointers to what is and is not ‘art’. Aesthetics as theory ranges from perspectives such as Zangwill’s view of the absolute autonomy of the art-work to reception theories and hermeneutic approaches. Aesthetics is often linked to the notion of making a value judgement. Kant considered that these judgements are ‘disinterested’ and derive from deeper schema. This perspective eschews the affective nature of engagement and sees the art-work as autonomous, standing alone in it own terms. This perspective is one of informed reflection. Other theorists such as Fisher (1999) have focussed on the rarity of moments of encounter with the ‘sublime’. Our secular perspectives are inflected, some would say infected, with ideas of ‘beauty’ and ‘truth’ as universals, and their relationship as found in instances of art – the transcendent realised in immanence. The emergence of the ‘artist’ and the notion of ‘the work’ have led some to focus on intentionality, self-expression by the artist and integrity of artistic intent as understood in the sense of ‘authenticity’ that art-works possess. This can be contrasted with creative acts which are not primarily the self-expression of the artist but are able to point to, or create space for the perception of some feature of human life and consciousness. Aesthetics also concerns itself with philosophical problems of ‘realism’ and ‘representation’. Music is immersed in this history of our relationship between nature and imagination.

6.9. Some commentators are reworking these links in relation to religion in concepts such as ‘theopoesis’ (Williams, 2005, Begbie, 2013). Here creation understood theologically is related to human creativity. On this view there is no ‘world’ to interpret that is not already intended to be intelligibly the basis for all interpretability. The world as creation unfolds as our imaginative realisations enable an authenticity of co-creation when the artist has ‘listened’ to creation itself. Again these creative acts are not primarily the self-expression of the artist or composer.

6.10. Aesthetic judgements certainly take place in a social context, a listening habitus. According to Bourdieu (1999) and experimentally confirmed by Hargreaves & North (2010) different ‘taste publics’ emerge. In music listening, different genres seem to be related to different groups, social classes, and educational and income levels. Hargreaves, in reviewing the evidence for the relationship between musical preference and life-style, concluded that Bourdieu’s view on the association between ‘high art’ such as opera and classical music and a high income, well-educated ‘taste public’, ‘is broadly supported’ (Hargreaves, 2010:539). There are also age-related and developmental aspects to aesthetic appreciation. Le Blanc (1991) operationalized the concepts of ‘open-eardness’ and ‘listener tolerance’ and explored listeners preferences. His thesis was generally supported: children are in early years, ‘open-earded’, and this declines in later childhood. Children are able to discern different musical styles from a very early age, and some studies have shown responses to musical sounds heard before birth. Childhood listening tastes converge at 10-11 years with preferences for narrower styles of popular music. They diverge and open up as adolescence turns to young adulthood, and ‘open eardness’ declines as listeners mature to old age. This open-eardness and tolerance which changes over time, and shows patterns of convergence and divergence happens within genres and styles, and not just between them. Aesthetic appreciation takes place in all cases. The tendency to equate open-eardness with the capacity to appreciate complex, challenging music from the classical genre is to be avoided. The social psychological discipline of ‘experimental aesthetics’ and ‘appreciation’ distinguishes between the ‘aesthetic’ and the ‘affective’ components and posits a links between ‘psychological arousal’ and ‘liking for music’, with the former being a predictor of musical preference. This is a narrow use of the concept of ‘aesthetics’ and equates it with ‘musical preference’ and by further reduction to ‘physiological arousal’. It leaves out of the appreciation and appraisal process, reflective practices, memory, interpretation and meanings. Such a narrow view of aesthetics cannot address the nuances of the appreciation of the value of music which on first listening is not thought pleasant, or the view that accepts the value of an art-work that is difficult to engage with, or is puzzling.

6.11. Aesthetics is ubiquitous in social life, in clothes, manners, styles of speech, and in identity and recognition. Brands have their aesthetic, as Apple attests. In a sense all artists have their own aesthetic. Institutional aesthetics have become some of the most powerful communicative transactions of daily life. Musical styles are closely associated with what Charles Taylor (1999) calls ‘closed world systems’ in which encoded discourse and symbolism play a key part in marking off different groups. Therefore to listen to, and understand, certain kinds of music it is necessary to enter more than a ‘sound world’, but another listening habitus.

6.12. So any project such as this, engaging in ‘aesthetics’ will have to take account of this wide diversity in approaches. The action-research, and participatory aspects of this proposal entail the creation of new spaces, *Active Listening Groups* and *Listening Seminar Events* which are intended to provide material and opportunities for the sharing of an emerging aesthetic expressive genre, taking shape in *Ethnographies of Listening* and various writings as *Music Poetics.*

6.13. In my thesis of *Auditory Play* below, I set out a number of dimensions of listening practices. I theorise that aesthetic appreciation will reflect the listening practices adopted. I suggest, following Spitzer (2004), that schema, prototypicality and metaphor will play key parts in articulations of listening experiences. I regard aesthetic appreciation as reflective expression upon ‘sense-making’ of both ‘sensation’ and ‘sense as meaning’ developed by Nancy (2000), that is, a reflexive capacity, taking place in detail, in time, after reactions, affect, responses, and interpretations – what is ‘made of’ the encounter with the art-work – is well under way.However it is important, given the above comments on aesthetic discourses, that the project has a framework for thinking about aesthetic discourse in music that is capacious yet capable of differentiating the complex strands noted so far. The project needs also to be aware of related issues such as the status of the ‘art-work’, its relationship to the originator, its autonomy as an ‘object’, or a ‘thing’ (Kramer, 2007), the nature of ‘realism’ and ‘representation’, which are important areas of debate, but which, if they present themselves as intractable problems, and inhibit opinion, may be perceived as problems to be ‘solved’ before an expressed appreciation can be a valid ‘aesthetic’ appraisal.

6.14. I propose certain provisional, open, ‘holding positions’ on a series of matters and concepts that require continued discussion that will enable progress in their practical applications to be made. Thee matters concern: aesthetics; representation; and the relationship between music’s grammar and language in general.

6.15. On aesthetics my ‘holding position’ is to suggest a framework borrowed from Maritain in Williams (2005).

1. Art is an action of the intelligence and this makes claims about how things are.

2. As such art invites contemplation; that is it sets out to create something that can be absorbed by intelligence, rather than being a tool for use in a project larger than itself.

3. Cannons for understanding art must relate to the integrity of what is being produced, not to a goal extrinsic to this process of labour.

4. When art engages the will by its own integrity and inner coherence, we speak of its beauty; but beauty cannot be sought of as something in itself, independent of what this work demands.

5. By engaging us in unforeseen patterns of coherence or integrity, art uncovers relationships and resonances in the field of perception that ‘ordinary’ seeing and experiencing obscure or even deny.

6. Art in one sense ‘dispossesses’ us of our habitual perception and restores to reality a dimension that necessarily escapes our conceptuality and our control. It makes the world strange.

7. Art opens up the dimension in which ‘things are more than they are’, give more that they have’. These energies and activities are outside the scope of representation and instrumental reason.

6.16. This précis of Williams’ perspective on Maritain’s aesthetics provides us with a useful holding position. The art-work stands alone as a generative force and energy, but is an imagined intelligible world, thus our relationship to it is mediated by a human intelligence at work within it. We respond to it rather than appropriate it. It makes our world strange, challenges our habitual perceptions and assumptions. It is generative of responses rather than reproductive of some object in the world, it is both a gain to actuality and yet rooted in a reality it discloses. It is not limited or fully defined by the self-expression of the composer. Beauty is not located in responsive pleasure, or established against some universal abstract criterion but is a quality of integrity and coherence, of form and the balance of elements.

6.17. This leads to the second holding position concerning art and representation and accounts of encounters with art-works as themselves forms of representation. In what sense is music representational? I do not refer to the issue of ‘programmed’ music here but to the more general matter of intelligibility and communicative intent. Music is an aural, sonic, expression ‘representation’ of an imagined sonic world of the composer. This suggests that music being composed and imagined is not a depiction of objects existing in the world, but may be an evocation of states of being in the world, and reflecting that relationship between being and the world. Hence the simple desire to appropriate and incorporate the musical art-work into a narrative and our narrative of reflection on our engagement with it. Williams proposes a generous usage of the concept of ‘representation’. It is not a process of imitation or mirroring, it always entails, in language generally and in music, ‘a complex of internally related elements recognisable in a symbolically literate culture as rendering something other than itself in a new form’ (Williams, 2014:190). This is an ‘analogical patterning in the elements of a different medium’. So representation in art is not some impediment to some obscured or inaccessible reality for which there might be a yearning that it one day will be revealed, by decoding or explanation in music theory. It is, and creates, the state of affairs that it also represents. The listener is emancipated to engage with it in these terms. Problems of representation have also been linked to the issue of authorial intent and the self-expression of the artist. Listening to music is not simply a communicative act between the self-expression of the artist and the listener. What Williams is reminding us of is the way in which creativity may point to some disclosure of the nature of the world, and also be mediated by the medium and its nature, and this may not primarily be about the self-expression of the composer. This problematizes the question of interpretation by conductors and performers when they base their interpretations on the idea of authorial intent and self-expression. Their interpretations are in fact of the music and it relation to the world, and how the world is perceived and cognised by listeners.

6.18. The third holding position I propose concerns the related observations that music’s meanings have historically been integrated with words, yet instrumental music alone possesses a grammar and syntax with no semantic content. Since this project entails the languaging of music by accounts of listening experiences is has to consider this relationship.

Some quotations from Julian Johnson (2015) will enable me to sketch out the key issues.

Music is similar to linguistic ways of understanding the world (as a formation of heterogeneous particulars into an integrated whole) but quite different to them (its configuration of sensuous materials remains a-linguistic, a-representational and a-real). This relationship of non-identity is central to the power and value of music in modernity ­– understood not as a lack of relation (which would make music irrelevant and meaningless) but rather as a very close relation defined by a particular quality of affinity and difference. Music and language are thus like two magnetic fields, exhibiting a simultaneous mutual attraction and repulsion. (Johnson, 2015:243).

Johnson applauds the rejection of the view that ‘music says in singing, what the word says in saying’. He insists on the difference between music and language, but explores the complex and ambivalent relationship between them.

Music’s peculiar value to modernity derives from its imitation of language, its absorption and reworking of linguistic structures, but while all the time subjecting it to creative derangement by means of foregrounding the particularity of its material over the logic of the whole, above all in the way that the momentary particularity and presence of sound constantly plays against its principles of order and structure. Musical modernity is thus allied not only with an idea of meaningfulness, but also with a sense that by constructing a meaningful whole through the interaction of its sensual particulars, it offers a specific and intensely experiential way of knowing the world. (Johnson, 2015:243).

Johnson establishes the autonomy of music in having meaning but is suspicious about the effects of assuming that this can be understood by judging music against the assumptions of language. For example, music does have narrative, dialogue, and ‘draws consequences from an idea’. The idea that somehow language is particular and specific and musical meanings are vague is turned around by the observation that music’s sensuous aspects are presented by ‘*this* sound, played in *this* place, at this time, by *this* person, and heard by *me’* –

Ask any musician whether he or she can be vague about the rhythmic placing of this note, its tone, its tuning, its dynamic, or the way this phrase is shaped, or relates to the next. It is ‘vague’ only in terms of the capacity of language to find for it a parallel term, but that sounds more like the vagueness of language than of music. (Johnson, 2015:309).

‘Music is heard as disclosive, but accompanied by an insistence that we cannot say what it is that it discloses’ suggests a posture of engagement in listening that is central to this project. Here I suggest that the listeners’ articulacy is not a reduction to a translated or decoded meaning, but a further act of generative creativity. It relationship to the integrity of the musical art-work is central, and this can be near or far, tending to the deconstruction of the piece through music theory at one pole to the appropriation of the piece entirely into the personal narrative world of the listener at another. The zone between is the space in which the tensions between music’s sensuous particularity, embodied presentness and the ‘lure of hermeneutics’ takes place – ‘trying to say in other terms what it is that music says in its own’ (Johnson, 2015).

Part of the exploration proposed here includes the trails that get laid down by the range of actors in the live music event. One trail leads to the conclusion that music is ineffable, another suggests that it ‘speaks more than it knows’ adding layers of interpretive meanings in its auditory life.

It is not that music points to something unsaid but rather to something unsayable….it set out a highly complex and sophisticated elaboration of the condition of the unsayable – a sounding of an interiority incommensurate with speaking. Of the unspoken centre, however, music is profoundly articulate. Because music foregrounds the gap between speaking and knowing, it has been taken to be trivial (saying nothing) and profound (saying what otherwise cannot be said) (Johnson, 2015:241).

It is the case that the place of silence in music is implicated in these resonant relationships as I will explore below.

6.19. Johnson also notes that the relationship between music and language is itself a site of cultural exploration and that composers and commentators have made play with the paradoxes of music’s meaning. For example the early development of instrumental music played with the idea of the ‘absent voice’ as did in Messiaen late in the use of plainchant in *Chronochromie* (1960). Debussy in composing *Mouvement* is thought by some (Jankelevitch, 1949) to represent ‘movement in general’ whereas Johnson notes that this is to misunderstand music in linguistic terms.

Debussy’s piece is not about movement in either a general or specific sense. To be sure, it may suggest to the listener all kinds of connections with ideas of movement, both general and specific, but it does so through the absolute particularity of its specific materials (open fifths, repeated scale fragments, dynamic contrasts) as realised in a specific performance by a specific performing body in a specific place. These are the bodily, material sensuous particulars of music, and it is precisely music’s insistence upon them that distinguishes it from language (Johnson, 2015:308).

6.20. So the tropes of the absent voice, saying the unsayable, saying more than can be said, implying meanings in titles like ‘movement’ are all part of the ‘lure’ of hermeneutics that music creates – what Kramer calls ‘the impossible account’. It exploits the gap between language and the world, and the part creativity and the imagination plays in it relation. This is fully explored in Williams (2014) in an extensive discussion. For modernism, Johnson claims, music’s relation to language made listeners conscious of the gap between knowledge and appearance, between the immediacy of subjective experience and the explanatory reach of a world under investigation – music plays upon the fear that there is a fundamental and perhaps irrevocable dissonance between experience and knowledge.

Kant attempts to reconcile the Enlightenment duality of experience (multiple, particular, diverse) and knowledge (unified, whole, interconnected); Classical music begins from the opposite direction, generating a structural whole from the particular detail. Both are ‘of the world’ as material practices of intellectual labour, yet at the same time ‘unworldly’ (removed, abstract, tangential), one takes place in the abstraction of philosophical language while the other is founded in the materiality of sound and performance (Johnson, 2015:243).

6.21. Therefore in this paper when we refer to the formulation that music has a grammar and syntax but no semantic content, that is a short-hand for the important issue touched on here, the relationship between language and music. A part of the thesis proposed here concerns listening as *Auditory Play* which occupies the space between language and musical performance. The modes of this play entail attention, ‘intentional unintentionality’, meditation, contemplation, silence, immersion and a further listening repertoire. It is the exploration of the staring point established by Johnson:

Music is that patterning of sensuous materials (tones, gestures, rhythms) is more than the sum of its parts, but it does not become a concept nor does it stand for something else. It is a form, to be sure, but one which leaves the embodied mind, and the mindful body, of the listener in ‘free-play’ (Johnson, 2015:309)

I have taken Johnson’s reference to ‘free-play’ and developed it into a model of *Auditory Play*.

6.22. Having established a series of holding positions on: aesthetics; representation; and the relationship of language to music; subjects which continue to play out as the background top this project, I can now proceed to consider the question of how music has its power and meanings. Marsh (2010) produces a simple map of the terrain, four ways in which music has its power, to which I will add a fifth.

*Five Sources of Power and Meaning in Music.*

6.23. First music has something to do with the qualities of *lived embodied rhythms of daily life* both physical and mental. Music, in harmony, rhythm, melody, pulse and timbre, presents to us a ‘tonal analogue of emotive life’ (Langer, 1953), it ‘stimulates the passions because it also simulates them’ (Marsh, 2010). This is the tradition deriving from Aristotle. Music has power and gives pleasure because it holds up an aural mirror to our embodied and sentient human lives. Music concerns ‘sentiment’ (Rosen 1987), affect and feeling. This concern underlies the ‘arousal’ theories in social psychology exemplified by Berlyne (1971).

6.24. Second, exploring how this might be, Marsh suggests that different musical intervals, melodic sequences, and harmonic combinations of notes create ‘demonstrable physical effects on our bodies’ – in temperature, in digestive processes and changes in pulse rate. He then links this to perception and cognition suggesting that by a mixture of innate and cultural influences we experience octaves and fifths as consonant and pleasant, the major third is ‘bright’, the minor third is ‘sad and subdued’, whilst the semi-tone, augmented fourth and major seventh are ‘unquestionably dissonant’. This is a perspective of inherent meaning in musical sound then linked to the research findings on arousal and autonomic bodily reactions. It has a deterministic and reductive character. Research strategies in this area, of formal determinism associated with emotional responses is exemplified by Gabrielsson & Linstrom, (2010) and Hevner (1937). North and Hargreaves (2008) have also attempted a model that ‘pulls together’ arousal and prototypical theories in a ‘reciprocal response model’. This is reproduced in Appendix 1.

6.25. These theories contrast with Scruton’s assertion that ‘the intentionality of perceptual experiences is determined by the concepts that inform them – either through perceptual beliefs or through acts of the imagination’ (Scruton, 2009:30). The anthropological model proposed here suggests that ‘auditory play’ mediates between the inherent (culturally learned or acoustically intrinsic) properties of sound heard as music, and the shift from perception and cognition to sense-making, to emergent meanings and to reflective aesthetic judgements. This ‘play’, a listening repertoire and practice, is modal, flexible non-linear and overdetermined. It creates, and discovers points and episodes of ‘fit’ between experience and interpretation.

6.26. Third, listening to music is an instance of *‘complex autonomic cognitive processing of musical stimuli’* (Marsh, 2010:38). Marsh suggests that this is the kind of knowledge that cannot be easily articulated, is deeply embedded, and automatically applied to music. Music here is placed in the general cognitive capacities we have developed to navigate our environment. Listening to music is an area of practice in which we become adept at recognising patterns, repetition, shape, pulse, statement and elaboration, and brings pleasure, through both listening and expectation/anticipation (Huron, 2007) and associative memory. Marsh contends that ‘as listeners get to know a piece of music, they process it more richly and find it more aesthetically pleasing. And they do all this without thinking’ (Marsh, 2010:39). I shall return to this perspective when I consider the theories of Johnson and Lackoff on the cognitive role of metaphor, the theory of Spitzer (2004). I shall also draw on the work of Harris (2000) on the necessary role of the imagination and affect in cognition in children and adults. These theories, linked to the philosophical investigations of Scruton (1999) and Kivy, (1990) and the hermeneutics of Kramer (2011), suggest strongly that although Marsh might suggest that music has its impact on listeners who are ‘without thinking’ that that is no reason to suppose that a listening repertoire cannot be developed, and that accounts cannot be given of understanding that arise in listeners. There is a view that experience**s** of listening to music are just that –plural, and multi-modal. This view suggests that the effects of listening to music are overdetermined, that is that they entail several perceptual and cognitive pathways simultaneously, some of which are (or can be made) conscious, and others that are limbic and out of our awareness. I speculate that it is this feature that allows us to have and develop a repertoire of ways of listening which foregrounds one of these operative systems. So ‘arousal’ (North & Hargreaves, 2008) speaks to the sensate bodily effects, whereas ‘resonance’ (Nancy, 2007) is the awareness of this subjective engagement with the music*, le corps sonore*. Reactions to and memories of, musical patterns may exist and at another processing level be linked to formal and structural awareness of the whole art-work, and appreciation of complexity, asymmetric patterns as stimulating. Visual engagement with the gestures and expressions of performers creates different qualities from listening with eyes closed, as it were ‘in the dark’, and so on. Music fascinates precisely because it can ‘move’ around between different perceptual systems, and allows listeners to engage in this multi-modality of reception through *Auditory Play*.

6.27. Fourth, Marsh suggests that the power of music can be related to *‘the extraneous associations that individual listeners bring to a performance’* (Marsh, 2010:39). These can be many a various, places, people, events, and other media such as film – ‘they are playing our song’. This is a form of appropriation whereby an object, in this case a musical composition is so appropriated and absorbed into the life-world of the listener that it is transformed into, and becomes a symbolic object with a nexus of meanings related to that life-world. These associations (personal narrative) and memory (recognition of the music) become elided in their listening, even to the extent that they find the music in a particular invariant rendition most satisfying. The music is in that sense is better rendered for this listening posture as mimetic so that the associations can be enjoyed, the music as live music is not being interpreted or elaborated. This stasis can of course be easily achieved by listening to recordings but cannot be achieved by live music performance which necessarily offers listeners a unique realisation. In my model of *Auditory Play* I refer to this listening posture as ‘listening as hearing’.

6.28. Fifth, Marsh alludes to ‘extraneous associations’ but not to *cultural functions.* Music is historically intrinsic to many social functions. The marching drum, the funeral march, the *Last Post*, the *Fanfare,* the *Wedding March* and *National Anthems* all use music to express specific socially enacted meanings for groups and cultures. Indeed Marsh’s book (Marsh, 2010) is devoted to an exploration of recreational music, ballads, occupational song, ‘the art of skipping’, dance, the ringing of church bells, and the singing of lullabies. He notes that words and rites were part of music’s development. Therefore it is essential to recognise that function and received meanings through martial, religious, and folk settings have enduring traces in pure or absolute music. A complex example of this ongoing process is the way in which sacred music is now enjoyed in a concert setting. The meanings of the words, for example ‘Qui tollis peccata mundi….’ have been subsumed in the re-creation of the music, often in polyphonic acapella singing. In concert the words have mostly lost their communicative meaning in religious terms and also therefore their common binding power, and have become part of the music as vocal sounds with no specific meaning. Paradoxically, such concerts often take place back in church settings. I shall return to this shift later when I consider the relationship between the aesthetic and the spiritual, re-enchantment, and the ideas of ‘theopoesis’ in the work of Begbie (2013).

6.29. In summary, Marsh suggest that music’s power derives from:

*1. Ability to mirror in sound the rhythms and movements life.*

*2. The sense inherent in musical sounds.*

*3. Pattern recognition and autonomic reactions.*

*4. Extraneous associations.*

*5. Cultural functions.*

These five sources of music’s power, derived from the work of Marsh, raise a number of issues relevant to an anthropological research study of listening and musical meaning. First it is possible for each of these explanations to be more prominent that the others even though they might all be thought to be operative. Different compositions, different genres, and different settings for listening may create conditions for different sources of power to operate.

6.30. These five sources also tend to operate as explanations and here certain problems arise for the study of how understanding and meaning is made by listeners. Reductive explanations have a tendency to ‘explain away’ (particularly by using reductive research methods to focus on aspects 2 & 3 above) as if what is left of significance and meaning is an epiphenomenon, and not constructed, as a creative act by the listener. The perspective of this paper is anthropological which seeks to uncover meanings and patterns of meanings in what are considered knowledge practices, in this case listening to live music. These perceptions, cognitions and interpretations are here regarded as real, can stand alone, and are real in their consequences for viewing the art-work, the listening self, others and the world. This perspective links three domains in a cumulative and collaborative construction of personal and shared cultural meanings. This study is about the relations in this respect, of creating meaning, between composer creativity, conductor and performer interpretation and the imagination of listeners. It is to uncover the potential for personal articulations and shared aesthetic discourse which are gains to actuality rather than the effect, consequence or outcomes of a process of transmission coupled with a terminus which is a decoding reception of pre-set meanings. This is not to deny that meaning is in some way ’in’ or intrinsic to music or to ignore composer intentionality, but it attempts bring the listening audience potentially into a collaborative relation with these elements.

**7. Philosophical Perspectives.**

7.1. I now turn to consider some philosophical perspectives on the question of music’s power and how it can be thought to generate meaning in listeners. The research project here is to examine how experience of live music gives rise in and amongst auditors to certain experiences, to sense, meaning and interpretation. There are various acts of interpretation going on within the framework of the social systems and relations I have defined, and these are plural – those of the, composer, performers, the conductor, and the listeners. What is required is a sufficiently capacious theory to contain and link these plural hermeneutics and not reduce them to a single linear theory of communication or transmission. The approach here would therefore be called ‘hermeneutic’. Kramer (1993) notes that *a hermeneutic theory is only as good as the interpretations it underwrites*. I am positing the existence of a muted discourse comprising personal meanings and shared group aesthetic exchange located in the listening audience to live performance, but within a framework that links the creative, performative, and interpretive activities of composers, conductors, and performers by adding the imaginative perspective found in the listening audience. I also theorise that listening and hearing are activities that are multiple, and overdetermined. That is to say that several overlapping perceptual and cognitive modes of our awareness and our bodily ‘awareness’ are implicated.

7.2., Here I will sketch out below two important positions in the philosophy of music, Scruton’s ‘cognitive dualism’ and Kivy’s ‘patterned formalism’, and then link them to Kramer’s approach to hermeneutics in music. These frameworks enable us to clarify how we think listeners to live music engage in sense-making, and that in turn will provide a way of reading the ethnographic accounts listeners give of this sense-making.

7.3. Scruton believes in cognitive dualism, a twofold way of viewing the human and the world at large. In music an ‘overreaching intentionality’ is expressed in inter-subjectivity (Scruton, 2014:140) and reaches out to a world shaped by our own consciousness. By reason and the mind we shape both *Welt* and *Lebenswelt*. Scruton makes play with the metaphor of ‘home’ ­– the aesthetics of everyday life which entails our search for ‘endorsement and security from the place where we are’, and music likewise ‘Builds in useless space its godly home’ (Rilke in Scruton , 2014:14) and this appears in the trajectory, ‘movement’ and structures of music itself. It is possible to chart these structures in music criticism by talk of form and structure, key relations, harmonic progressions, in showing sequences, episodes, repetitions, and how momentum is created in musical argument. But Scruton wants to explore the ‘life’ in music and not only the syntactical surprises that we come across in listening to it with an informed ear.

7.4. The other side of this cognitive dualism can be seen in reductive *explanations* (in contrast to understandings) tied to methods, naturalistic explanations, social Darwinian and evolutionary theory. These discourses tend towards ‘acoustics’ and to the study of ‘pitched sounds’ whereas ‘acousmatics’ is the appreciation of music that is shaped by our own consciousness, and to be studied not by explaining how it arose but by interpreting what it means. ‘Until you define what music is, and how it differs from pitched sounds, you will not know what question you are asking when you enquire into its origins’, and ‘if music has a meaning then it is what you understand when you understand it (Scruton, 2014:141,143,161). Listening to music is an encounter with life, we have aesthetic and moral purpose in attending to the intrinsic order and meaning of events in ‘musical space’ and music is ‘an appearance’ a created gain to actuality not found in nature.

7.5. The ‘aboutness’ of music does not depend on analogy with human emotions such that slow, ponderous and drooping music has that communicative emotional meaning. The source for the meanings of these metaphors can be sought in the body. Sadness is not a feature that music can literally possess. So what goes on when we hear sadness in the music? We are dealing with metaphorical perception – hearing the music under a concept that does not literally apply to it. And we do this by directing towards the music the overreaching intentionality that we direct towards each other, thereby situating music within the *Lebenswelt* at the place where we place our fellow subjects (Scruton, 2014:161) [[10]](#footnote-10)

7.6. Scruton deploys the metaphors of ‘movement’ and ‘space’, movement in musical space. This space is ordered by fields of force that seem to be radiated from the notes that occur there. This space is where a sonic world is imagined and held together by the creative act of compositional relations where music is ‘perceived resolution of the conflict between freedom and necessity made available in a space of its own’ ­­– ‘a pattern of pure intention’ (Scruton, 2014:146, 161). Scruton makes the point that metaphors of movement are not just metaphors but dead metaphors taken as literal:

..nothing literally moves in musical space, but the idea of space cannot be illuminated from our experience of music, We are dealing with an entrenched metaphor – but not a metaphor of words, exactly, for we are not talking about how people describe music; we are talking about how they experience it. It is as if there is a metaphor of space and movement embedded within our experience and cognition of music. (Scruton, 2014:147)

7.7. So, music is *sui generis,* not found in nature and best not reduced to anything else. It is an imagined and created reality which cannot be grasped from the ‘ordinary cognitive standpoint’. Music does not work like language works. Musical movement in musical space gathers a background intentionality to it and seems in itself to be goal directed ­– it moves towards closures and half closures, towards home and does so in the ‘space of reasons’. This movement is a completed gesture which completes itself out of its own inner content, which has no purpose but itself and yet which accomplishes that purpose. Music has compulsion, and internal necessity it is won out of the tension between freedom and necessity or constraint ­– it actually creates its own aura of necessity [[11]](#footnote-11). The qualities of this real presence, moving in musical space also uses silence as the canvass or prima material and ‘themes are also punctuated by silences in which the expressive burden is somehow greater than that born by the notes’ (Scruton, 2014:153).

7.8. Scruton also addresses the practice of listening and its relationship to meaning and interpretation. He asks what might be meant by ‘grasping a content’ in music. This he asserts is rarely a matter of identifying an object that the music is about, it is more about hearing likenesses to states of mind. Music has a ‘pure aboutness – an intentional reach from which both terms subject and object have been deleted. Music can acquire content by association with titles, object, images, setting and text, and be thought to express emotions, but these are ‘external additions, and are not part of the musical content’ (Scruton, 2014:162). So the intentional content of a piece of music belongs to it as music. It ‘unfolds with the musical line and is not some passing analogy or likeness’ and our listening reactions perceive qualities of movement which is illusory in a literal sense, intentionality, and subjectivity without a name. It elicits in the listener an embodied engagement that is more akin to dancing than hearing.

The life in the music is there by the virtue of the fact that you can dance with it. The life in the music is the power to elicit a parallel life in you….life in the music is an imagined life and the dance one way of imagining it. (Scruton 2014:165)

Listening to music is like being in the presence and in contact with someone else ‘breathed’ through the musical line. We appropriate it through sympathy and attach it to our own experience. We are being socialised by the intimacy of the creation we inhabit.

7.9. Scruton therefore asserts a strong ontology for music, it intends itself, as ‘ethereal intentionality’ a ‘pure event’ like a rainbow in ‘a metaphysical space of it own’, and we are the music while the music lasts. In this engagement the meditative weight we bring and the engagement with the created space of musical movement as with another (and co-present in an audience) is not about statements but states of mind – a way of reaching out to the world, which we attribute to no specific subject and connect with no specific object, but which nevertheless awakens our sense of sympathy, gift and wonder – and this gesture is an open and virtuous way of relating to the world.

7.10. Scruton addresses the key issue of musical expression and its relationship to emotional states in *Understanding Music. Philosophy and Interpretation* (Scruton, 2009). Scruton argues that musical sound is a pure event. This means that we hear an organised pattern which is not reducible to either the properties of the sound or to what causes it. Hearing musical sounds requires an exercise of the ear, an acoustic capacity, which only a creature with imagination can hear. This involves the ‘construction of an imaginary world by unfolding a narrative’ . A melody only ‘moves’ through imaginary space and time, and literal perception and imaginative perception co-exist. That we imagine music to move in space and time is also related to embodiment, to movement and dance, to the upbeat of lifting the foot and the downbeat of the tread. Movement has also to do with narrative drive and the cadences of resolution and closure, the returning in repetition to the ‘same again’. It also has to do with enspacement, moving through a space, and to be being emotionally moved.

7.11. Understanding music as music is, for Scruton, not a decoding or deciphering of sounds but an aesthetic experience, imaginatively constructed. It is also intrinsic to the musical structure. The response of the listener is analogous to the way in which we understand the meaning of metaphor. ‘I “unpack” a metaphor by describing the experiences and thoughts that it brings to mind, and that is how I should explain any description of music in terms of its expressive power’ (Scruton, 2009:52). Scruton describes engaging with music not so much as ‘going within’ but, following Wittgenstein, as the kind of process that takes place when we see a facial expression on the face of another. This analogous relationship with musical expression also applies to the corporate and social aspects of listening – there is an emotional sociality to listening together – and to accounts that listeners may give as they ‘unpack’ their experiences.

7.12. There is much in this account to ground a phenomenology of listening, and the ‘voice’ of the audience. Sympathetic listening in the senses of ‘movement’ that Scruton describes and musical expression imagined as that which has the qualities of engagement with facial expression, are part here of a constructed acoustic, aesthetic, imaginative experience. Expressiveness of music takes place though our emotional responses, just as we respond to the face of another. These emotions are corporate in the sense that we have them together in proximity, in co–presence (Giddens 2007), in co-sentience (Eco, 2007) in a systemic emergent musical atmosphere (Neri, 1999) that creates ‘interinanimation’ (Donoghue, 2014), in what Bourdieu (1977, 1990) calls a ‘habitus’. Scruton further notes that if this is the way music works then it is of a piece with the way in which we are formed as subjects and also the way in which shared public orders are created thereby. His argument is that:

We become what we are through our interpersonal emotions, building our personality as freely acting subjects through the interaction with others, in which we shape and are shaped by our own emotional life….subjective states of mind are transformed into rational responses to a public world, so that the subject comes to know him/herself as one subject amongst others. (Scruton, 2009:52).

This is also the position that Kramer adopts in his discussion of subjectivity (Kramer, 2011:46-62).

7.13. It is possible to see therefore how Scruton can suggest that listening to music can make a difference to our lives and be a virtuous pursuit without falling into notions of utility related to the representation of objects by music.[[12]](#footnote-12) He also suggests a theopoesis, or a space in which that might be imagined as a negative theology.[[13]](#footnote-13)

“Music is a movement of nothing in a space that is nowhere, with a purpose that is no-one’s, in which we hear a non-existent feeling the object of which is nobody. And that is the meaning of music” (The speaker is Perictione). I would add only that it is not just the object that is a nobody: it is the subject too. Music offers us a pure aboutness that we can put to other uses, but which in its pure form has a kind of cleansing effect on the sympathetic listener: it opens us to sympathy between subjects, without the encumbrance of an objective world. The useless space of music is, in Rilke’s words, a godly home. It therefore offers an icon of the religious experience. (Scruton, 2014: 166).

Scruton’s personal philosophy provided a conceptual sounding board by its attempts at completeness and its personal commitment. From it we can explore some of the questions it raises.

7.14. Kivy, also a philosopher, by contrast, sets out the roots of an uncompromising formalist view. According to the formalist creed, absolute music does not posses semantic or representational content. It is not of or about anything; it represents no objects, tells no stories, gives no arguments, espouses no philosophies. According to the formalist. Music is pure sound structure; and for that reason the doctrine is sometimes called musical ‘purism’ (Kivy,2002:67). Here Kivy does not differ from Scruton.

7.15. Kivy proposes an ‘enhanced formalism’ which gives due weight to ‘sensuous properties’ of the sounds of individual notes, chords, tone colours, timbre, instrumentation, and suggests that musical forms are ‘temporal patterns of sound’ and that ‘temporal patternism’ would be a better name for the theory of formalism. The ongoing conflict that Kivy addresses is that between those who wish to hold to the experiential and interpretive view that music possesses representational and semantic properties beyond its structural and sensuous ones ­ the latter pair being central to the formalist view.

7.16. Before returning to the epistemological ‘how’ of music’s communicability and intelligibility Kivy asks what we enjoy in our apprehension of musical structure. His various answers to this question are instructive. He suggests that by analogy to the film or novel that that we are interested in *narrative* and *story*, its unfolding of it through both style, elegance and the turns of plot. In music the events that unfold are purely musical events. Kivy also introduces the matters of sensing and thinking, and key to his argument is the fact that we think about the events that we are experiencing. This self-consciousness is key to his argument and also reaches into the phenomenological enquiries into ‘listening’, stimulated by the work of Nancy which will be considered below. Kivy thickens his argument by reference to Meyer’s ‘information theory’ (Meyer,1956) and to Schopenhauer’s comparison of the human condition to *The Wheel of Ixion* (Schopenhauer, 1844).

7.17. The first relates to the way expectation and anticipation works in listening to music in the context of the analogy with the unfolding of events in a film or a novel and to the reflexive, more-or-less musically informed self-conscious playfulness that Kivy considers key to listening enjoyment. Meyer makes a simple distinction between the weight of perceived information being received depending on the familiarity and regularity with which it has been previously anticipated. Kivy suggests that musical sound events are evaluated in terms of the degree to which they are anticipated, an unexpected musical event is highly informative. There are two kinds of musical sound events: ‘syntactical’ which relate to the rules of musical grammar and ‘formal’ events which are the larger structural forms. An example of the latter would be sonata form, which in its movement from exposition, through free play and development to recapitulation and arrival or homecoming illustrates the modes and phases of anticipation, unfamiliarity, repetition, and recognition. These expectations themselves have dual sources, the ‘external’ ones that the listener brings and the ones ‘internal’ to the engagement with the sound event.

7.18. Kivy has the difficulty of both explicating musical events by analogy to film and fiction narrative and leaving it behind to claim that music is syntax and grammar without semantic content – that its sounds are non-representational and carry ‘of themselves’ no meaning content. It appears to depend on the exploration of the listener experience to see how this takes shape and can be explained in terms of the logic of musical form. In leaving the analogy Kivy also distances music from the other ‘fine arts’ which, he argues, tend to the representational and are imbued with linguistic content. Here he cites Schopenhauer in suggesting that ‘other arts reveal the ideas behind the appearances, but music reveals what is behind the ideas, the basis of reality, the striving metaphysical will’.

In order for music to achieve this ‘abstraction’ it has to be freed from a function and semantic reference yet it has to address the problematic questions of arousal and emotion, for which we clearly have words which are themselves applied by listeners to musical experiences and indeed the intentions of composers and performers.

7.19. Kivy follows Hanslick in being sceptical of the idea that music itself arouses emotions, based on the grounds that listeners are, when questioned, in disarray and disagreement over what emotions are apparently being aroused. Kivy claims that this is consistent both with the non-representational nature of music and its non-expressive relationship to arousal. The attempt of Langer to square this circle only raises further problems. Langer with Schopenhauer could hold that emotion (albeit singular) was in the music, not the listener, while more or less accepting Hanslick’s sceptical conclusion that music cannot represent and certainly cannot arouse the individual garden-variety emotions. What it can do, she claims, is to represent or symbolise the emotive ebb and flow as a whole, by being ‘isomorphic’ with it (Kivy, 2002:28). This what Aristotle meant in suggesting that music ‘imitates’ the emotions, and similar to Marsh’s aphorism that ‘music stimulates as it simulates’ the emotions.

7.20. How then are we to understand and explain the fact that listeners do find emotion in music, rather than simply projecting it there, and can in contrast to Hanslick’s ‘disagreement and disarray’ often find common agreement in descriptions of music as joyful or melancholic? Kivy’s argument is that perception of music is not simply linear cause and effect but is perceptually instantaneous and inherent as ‘red is to the apple’ and ‘cheerfulness is to the colour yellow’. This hearing perception takes place differently from the visual. Hearing is a secondary sense to sight, where the control of closing the eyes differs from the openness of hearing, and the involuntary ­– we cannot close our ears – and secondary nature of hearing has become vestigial. Kivy puts forward his *Contour Theory* based on these ideas and which also includes the following features: first. that we hear music as expressively animate and sounds have an analogy to the expressions we use, in bodily behaviour, gesture and vocal and linguistic expression. Second, that we hear this unconsciously as a result of the evolutionary relationship between the primacy of sight and the secondary status of hearing. Third, that the perception of both animate beings (the sadness of the St Bernard dog is his example) and inanimate objects – the redness of the apple, is direct a perception of the object.

7.21. Kivy concedes the difficulty of incorporating such features as minor and major keys and diminished chords into an explanation of musical contours which reflect human behaviour. He suggests that while we do have affective associations with major and minor and that diminished chords seem ‘active, unconsummated, unresolved and restless in musical function’ that they do so within the overall ‘formal’ structure as ‘syntactical’ events. Kivy concedes that the expressive view of musical performance, and that it is expressive of garden variety emotions is hard to dislodge, in spite of our apparent inability to give a convincing explanation of how it takes place. He proposes a ‘black box’ where we know what goes in and what comes out but what causes it to produce what comes out of that we are ignorant. So where the philosopher gives up is where the composer, the performer and the listener can develop a dialogue that might begin to open up how creation and co-creation might entail passion and passionate interpretation.

7.22. The difficulties of addressing emotion and expressive/arousal theories do not undermine the central tenets of the formalist case, that musical sound is a syntactical grammar, free from semantic content and that music is not representational and is content free, that is not ‘about’ anything. This seems an excessively narrow perspective, leaving aside the intentionality of the composer and the listening dispositions, habitus, of the listeners as culturally situated in a web of social and performative meanings. What this strict attention to content and meaning ‘in’ music does however is to shift emphasis to these other domains of linguistic interpretation. Two points arise from this. If music is a communicative act between the composer, conductor, performer and audience then we can see that the sonic world that is created is always a generative space for ‘play’ response and continued creativity. In expanding the plurality of this matrix we can balance the insistence on the autonomy and integrity of the art-work and composer intentionality with the hermeneutic and generative possibilities of audience responses. The paradox lies in the actuality of having a wordless experience of music and the impossibility of have an experience at all which is non-linguistic. The transition from perception, to cognition, to articulated response is itself a function of modes of engagement, listening repertoire and of time and place. Johnson notes that as music allows us to be ‘elsewhere’, to be ‘out of time’, and sits aside from language, so it invites through memory, *later*, our expressive reflections.

7.23. To see his enhanced formalist theory to completion Kivy refers to both Kant and to Schopenhauer. Kivy’s reference to Kant introduces a social and universalising feature to the question of aesthetic enjoyment and judgement. The idea here is that as we individually achieve a state of ‘disinterestedness’ we will rise from the particular, or rather through the particular to the beauty of form – in Kivy’s terms from the ‘syntactic’ to the ‘formal’ level of appreciation. It is the shared human faculties of imagination and understanding that we deploy in the contemplation of *form* that creates the free-play of free-association, and as these perspectives rise to the *universal* via the social, the common ground of humanity, that our judgements of the beautiful will converge. In contemporary discourse we might say that as co-sentience and co-presence of listeners in the event of music creates a space of focussed inter-subjectivity on the musical sound, a ‘gathered’ systemic, fractal, shared quality emerges which creates a space where there can be a convergence of personal perspectives and this binds us rather than atomises us in forms of gatherdness and entrainment. Kivy is arguing that form is the cognitive mode that is the common denominator in convergent aesthetic discourse.

7.24. Kivy fills out this Kantian account with that of Schopenhauer. If all things have a reason and the reasons for things are framed in four ways: *in terms of cause and effect; in terms of premise and conclusion; in terms of motive and action; and in space and time* therefore the human condition is tied to these terms for understanding our striving:

It gives us no rest, but drives us relentlessly on to reason from cause to effect, action to motive, inference to conclusion in a never ending quest for finality we can never achieve, always under the domination of space and time, the conditions under which we are compelled to perceive our world (Kivy, 2001:253).

In Schopenhauer’s view we are tied to this ‘Wheel’, as Ixion was in the Greek myth, yet we are able to find a means of temporary escape from this unmitigated striving. The artist, composer is able to enable us a temporary escape, from this thraldom for intermittent periods. The artist enables us to perceive the world, to see through the world free of the constraints of these four framing tensions and perspectives. We are enabled to experience ourselves with others *outside* cause-effect, motive-action, premise-conclusion, space-time. It allows us to inhabit the world of the creator and of the artwork. The abstraction of music into ‘absolute musical sound’ releases us into a new space, and empty space in which constellates an engagement with another’s vision. The semantic emptiness of this space, the flatness of its surface and its expansive volume, in which we are co-presently enspaced allows us an encounter, on a journey of release that has its own end, a partial resolution. To this picture we may add Scrutons description of how music is expressive – as in the recognition of another’s face – and how the emotions engendered are corporately enspaced with others, and constitutive of both the subject and social orderings through their articulation, which itself is shaped like the unpacking of a metaphor. These reflective sequelae in personal accounts will be themselves a discursive metaphor shower (Spitzer, 2004). It is the task of the ethnographer to explore the ways in which these accounts, the ‘voice of the audience’ might help us understand the listening experience and to animate the theory. Both Scruton and Kivy provide us with many of the points of reference for this task.

7.25. Let me try to summarise the perspectives of these two thinkers.

Scruton is a cognitive dualist – our appreciation of the world is shaped by our consciousness. Music is an intentional construction not made of natural sounds found in nature. Human life and intentionality are realised in our appreciation of it. Music’s movement, its place in space and time, its affective and cognitive aspects are musical, meaning that our understanding of music is what we do when we understand music. This may seem like a tautology but merely established the status of music as sui generis, it is what it is and cannot be reduced to something else or better translated in another symbolic medium. This does not prevent us from speaking or writing about it. This pure musical content comes to us as a human enterprise, inviting engagement as we might read a human face and linguistically as we might unpack the meaning of a metaphor. Music is therefore not representational, it does not refer to things but may refer to us. Music cannot be reduced to literal meanings but has features of, movement, compulsion, necessity, tension, freedom, constraint and resolution. Music is a pattern of pure intention that elates to state of mind. Music is responded to by imagination derived from our own and our shared experiences. Listening to and understanding music is a self reflexive and a social activity, as such it is an activity that provides personal awareness and aesthetic pleasure, and these enhancements can be expressed in words.

7.26. Kivy is a formalist or in his words a ‘temporal patternist’. For him music does not possess semantic or representational content but does have sensuous properties. The patterns we enjoy are narrative, plot, anticipation of unfolding, anticipation, recognition of returning repetition, the playfulness of the unexpected and the resolution of homecoming. Music has a grammar and syntax but this caries no semantic content and this gives music it unique character as creating an open space for imagination and appreciation. Kivy is wary however of personal interpretation as the imposition of meanings onto patterns. He directs our attention to the music to its contours, patterns and shapes away from the staring point of the sensations it arouses. Here specific feelings and semantic expressions are relegated in relation to the primacy of structural form, patterns and contours. These patterns are related to basic schema of cause-effect, action-motive, inference-conclusion, space-time and these do not have to be about anything. Kivy is much nearer to the anti-receptionist views of Zangwill who denies any role for the audience in the definition of the art-work, than is Scruton.

7.27. These philosophers provide helpful conceptual frameworks which can inform and challenge the theory that underlies this anthropological perspective. It helps us to establish the status of musical creativity as an independent domain, sui generis and not capable of reduction or symbolic representation in other media. It also means in terms of our engagement with it that this is not usefully explained by other means, by acoustics, neuro-science or evolutionary theory. It strengthens the case for an enquiry into how we engage with music’s independence by listening, and how the expression of a composed art-work, though standing alone as expressive creativity, can be thought to be realised as its powers, and features allow an imaginative response to it by listeners. It may be that form, universality, shared appreciations of beauty, the striving within the four dimensions of Ixion are indeed operative, yet they do not tell us what these strivings are, what their detail is, what personal meanings emerge and how those meanings relate to a shared understanding and appreciation. It leaves open the question as to whether a convergent aesthetic understanding has to rely upon form and pattern as common denominators of whether a more varied pattern of a range of personal responses can be tolerated. For this to happen the inter-subjective and discursive work will be challenging, and patterns and form will remain be tempting structures on which to find agreement.

**8. Hermeneutics: Meaning and Music.**

8.1. The history of hermeneutics shows a shift from the starting points of Schleiermacher (1998), who establishes relations between: authorial intent and the recognition of subjectivities that might not be reductively determined by rules. He noted that the hermeneutic task is an art of *understanding the discourse of the other*. He established that the hermeneutic task is interactive, social, and as in the examples of worship and music, corporately constituted.

8.2. Davey has set out eleven theses derived from the philosophical hermeneutics of Gadamer (Davey 2006). This is not the place to develop a commentary on these and their relevance to musical understanding. What we can draw on from this source is the commitment to ‘the security of our being upheld by language’, to allow that, as experience constellates in language this can have a sense of ‘an immediate living certainty’. The openness to finding ways to speak is itself a source of instability, it is restless, an ‘unquiet understanding’ (Davey, 2006). It is ‘our rootedness in the transcendent elements of language that renders our dwelling within this world fundamentally safe and potentially meaningful’ (Davey, 2006:100). In other terms we can willing give ourselves to experiences that are not presaged by language in trust and confidence that we will stretch and expend our linguistic resources to speak of them.

8.3. There are two matters that flow from this, first our approach can be in search of accounts of listening experiences and constructions of meaning in words whilst recognising the inaccessibility of underlying schema that orientate us, and that the words that emerge may be fractured and unstable. In short, that these matters of listening and aesthetics can be spoken about.

Kramer (1993) as part of the ‘new musicology’ speaks of hermeneutic models and ‘windows’.

Hermeneutic windows tend to be located where the object of interpretation appears – or can be made to appear – explicitly problematical. Interpretation takes flight from breaking points, which usually means from points of under or overdetermination: on the one hand, a gap, a missing connection; on the other, a surplus of pattern, an extra repetition, and excessive connection. (Kramer, 2011).

The concept of ‘hermeneutic windows’ is related to other ways in which an interpretive opportunity, a ‘gaze’, is proffered to the listener. Kramer makes this link by noting that ‘the basic work of culture is to construct subject positions’ (Kramer, 2001:156). The concept of ‘subject-position’ has been adopted from film studies and applied to music. (Clarke, 1999:352). In my theoretical framework (Fig 1-3 above) I have identified the series of interpretive spaces in which ‘subject-positions’ are proffered to listeners, in particular from the pivotal position of the conductor/animateur.

8.4. The hermeneutic approach adopted here draws on these perspectives and seeks to explore an epoche, a window, where there is muted experience and potential aesthetic discourse. Anthropologists become understandably curious when some cultural feature shows some missing part of a pattern or a set of relationships. I have noted that we do not find, commonly, discursive accounts of the audience’s experience of listening to music and their descriptions of how it resonates with and within them nor do we know much of the interpretive strategies listeners use for making sense of music. Scruton’s view is clear that music is to be ‘understood’ (Scruton, 2014:144) and Spitzer argues that these understandings are necessarily metaphoric (Spitzer, 2004:85), that is, are creative responses to the music. If we accept this then we have a warrant to explore this territory and ask what these understandings are and how they are expressed. I also locate the starting point of that enquiry in listening practices themselves. This is not to give priority, conceptually or in time to a *practice* as if it were free of semantic potential, but to make a distinction between listening and hearing to open up this relationship, between sensation and sense-making.

8.5. So taking on Kramer’s challenge I will have to show how this hermeneutic model proposed here gives rise to interesting, novel, and surprising accounts, that entail interpretive activity – new modes of engagement – and that these can be found through the reportage of ethnographies of listening. I suggest that this is an emerging activity as *music poetics.* I also argue that listening practices and repertoire are generative of emergent meanings even from partial, fragmentary, ‘inattentive’ and immersive listening styles, rejecting in turn the idea that meaning has to be comprehensive in the sense of appreciating the whole musical structure in a formalistic way. Kramer’s support for this position entails the perspective of a narrative wandering thread, in narrative time, that allows this partial emergence of sense in an unfolding narrative.

8.6. I have set out in a series of quotations Johnson’s (2015) view on the relationship between music and language and that is consistent with the hermeneutic stance of Kramer (2011) and it is his framework that I now précis as relevant to this research.

8.7. Kramer invites us to understand music as a ‘cultural practice’ with its social histories, and its political dimensions, as well as its aesthetic dimensions. He believes that musical meanings are generated through interpretation:

Just what are musical meanings and how are they generated through interpretation – if they are? What is the status of the musical work – if it has one, if there is such a thing – when we subsume it under categories like culture and practice, and context? (What is context anyway?) How are works and meanings affected by musical performance? Is it interpreting music in the sense of performing it an instance of performativity in the larger sense? Is listening to music performative? (Kramer, 2011:64.)

These are some of the questions ‘critical musicology’ raises. To address them requires: ‘historically informed interpretation’; ‘philosophical critique’; ‘concern with the character of knowledge in general’; ’musical knowledge’; and ‘critical reflection’, a demanding list indeed and in a somewhat awkward position in relation to Kramer’s non-elitist and egalitarian desire to value the partial, fragmentary, and emergent responses of listeners as a legitimate basis for musical meaning and interpretation. This research proposal offers structures which an enable such a critical musicology to achieve a set of practices within this hermeneutic framework which can reconcile these commitments.

8.8. At the centre of this exploration is the question of how music has meaning. I have sketched various ‘answers’ in Section 6 above, and Scruton and Kivy (Section 7) have also commented on the matter. Kramer however is locating the question of meaning and interpretation of music in terms of hermeneutic practice, and in terms of listening practices.

8.9. For Kramer music has meanings in a number of paradoxical ways. The first of these is the desire that music be autonomous and that it’s meaning be ineffable. This in turn protects ‘the aesthetic pleasure of the monad’. Yet the strangeness of musical meaning is that music has meaning in the same way that everything else does, or does not. Meaning may be illusive, on the edge of words, it may be enclosed in that space by the insistence that it is unable to make ‘declarative sentences’. At the same time not all music has to have a meaning in that declarative sense. There are clearly passages of music which are mysterious, chaotic, not intending to mean anything at all but a sense of meaninglessness, and some of these ‘meanings’ may persist in music in ways nothing else can. The pull to a sense of escape, refuge from the world of over specified meanings and to pleasure is recognised by Kramer. His hope is that it can become ‘conceptual’ for the purposes of connecting beauty and truth. He hope that the art-work can enable ‘pleasure and truth to be connected, and that the musical art-work can be seen to have a content subject to assessment in terms of truth and dissimulation’ (Kramer, 2011: 66). Yet again, however Kramer asserts that ‘systematic accounts of expressive phenomena amount to a set of prior constraints on meaning’, favouring the evocative over the systematic, and claiming that ‘there is no semiotic system can contain the semantic energies’ that emerge from evocative and expressive acts that listening to music engenders. An extended quote will establish this nuanced position, and could be read as a ‘manifesto’ for the kind of enquiry proposed here.

Informal interpretations of music, phrases just blurted out – unsystematic, freely metaphorical, not especially articulate – are important far in excess of their apparent lack of substance. They have both social and cognitive value even if they do not rise to the level of the imaginary colloquy on Mendelssohn’s Violin Concerto *(note: this was a highly sophisticated formalistic analysis peppered with terms of art).* They activate shared assumptions about subjectivity; they foster feelings of alliance and identification; they participate in the hermeneutics of everyday life that maintains our intuitive, precritical sense of the world. Sharing in them is a form of world making. And it is also a form of music making, and echo of the music of that sphere. These ascriptions, these semantic improvisations, are not only habitual, they are inevitable; it is hard to imagine music without them. The strange thing is why we have so often tried. Just imagine, in the style of Wittgenstein, a ‘tribe’ that has music but is unable to speak about it, either aloud or in thought. In what sense would such a people really ‘have music’? (Kramer,2011:66)

8.10. Kramer’s hermeneutic strategy is to allow basic, emergent, unsystematic material that arises in response to listening to music to be part of a larger commentary. This extends to encompass many shared social functions, ‘treating culture as a kind of music, the melody of social practice’. He does not reject intra-musical formal analysis, and indeed his examples have great depth of musical knowledge. He rejects any dichotomy between ‘system and structure, detached observation, hard evidence, literal description’ on the one hand, and ‘process and practice, participant observation, suggestive evidence and metaphor’ on the other, on grounds that they need each other and because they collapse towards each other. Apparently technical descriptions begin to carry ‘figures and evocations’, and they in turn seek to be quasi-systematic ‘tokens of response’.

8.12. Listening becomes the site in which these movements begin. Our listening is generative of new meanings, they ‘challenge form’, they ‘negotiate with these forms, prompting reflection upon them’. Meanings that emerge, at the edge of words, or constellating in words are ‘irruptive’, like a short circuit, they are both uncertain and expansive, and in fact ‘integrated with, not remote from the general atmosphere of meaning in daily life’. Interpretation has to remain ‘open’, it cannot work on behalf of a fixed esoteric order’ and it ‘cannot make the structurally dogmatic assumption that there is a hidden, wholly organised meaning to which it alone holds the key’ (Kramer, 2011:64-67.). For the listener therefore, meaning ‘dose not inhere; it emerges; it acts. Meaning is an event, the occurrence of something singular. The event is one ‘that “occurs to” a subject in both senses of the term, “befalls” and “comes to mind”’. (Kramer, 2011:71).

8.13. Listening is generative of meaning and interpretation, and this proceeds through affect, sensory qualities of music, and by ‘unfolding in time’, narrative time. Meaning, interpretation and expressive responses require a relationship with language, even in its negation, its precariousness at the edge of words, and in the sense of the ineffable. It is worth noting again Johnson’s comments on language:

Music is similar to linguistic ways of understanding the world (as a formation of heterogeneous particulars into an integrated whole) but quite different to them (its configuration of sensuous materials remains a-linguistic, a-representational and a-real). This relationship of non-identity is central to the power and value of music in modernity ­– understood not as a lack of relation (which would make music irrelevant and meaningless) but rather as a very close relation defined by a particular quality of affinity and difference. Music and language are thus like two magnetic fields, exhibiting a simultaneous mutual attraction and repulsion. (Johnson, 2015:243).

Music’s peculiar value to modernity derives from its imitation of language, its absorption and reworking of linguistic structures, but while all the time subjecting it to creative derangement by means of foregrounding the particularity of its material over the logic of the whole, above all in the way that the momentary particularity and presence of sound constantly plays against its principles of order and structure. Musical modernity is thus allied not only with an idea of meaningfulness, but also with a sense that by constructing a meaningful whole through the interaction of its sensual particulars, it offers a specific and intensely experiential way of knowing the world. (Johnson, 2015:243).

8.14. Before closing this sketch of Kramer’s hermeneutics a further feature should be noted. This is his distinction between musical ‘objects’ and ‘things’. Kramer notes:

We treat music as an entity, and to understand it we treat it as if it contained entities: chords, motives, tonalities, and other more complex formations. But what kind of entities (my avoidance so far of both ‘object’ and ‘thing’ is deliberate) are these musical particles. The descriptive power gained by objectifying musical entities, is often considerable, and no comprehensive understanding of music can do without reifying some of them some of the time. But reified forms do not compose musical reality. They have no epistemic power to determine or exclude meaning. Another way of saying this is that musical entities are not virtual objects. Objecthood is just a role that they can play if required. (Kramer, 2011:186).

8.15. ‘Thing theory’ Kramer borrows from Brown (2001). Things are not fixed forms or objects they are changing states of affairs, which gather their history and meanings as they move, as in the phrase ‘things being as they are’ or even ’things are not what they used to be’. Things are ‘ontologically open’ and gather participants to them. Traditional vocabularies are ‘object’ oriented, whereas our cultural practices are ‘thing’ oriented. So musical entities are not objects but things, liminal forms between the animate and inanimate, the technical terms that name them are always provisional. Labeling musical entities, ‘settles neither their status nor their meaning’ (Kramer 2011:188). So musical entities can be both objects and things, states of affairs, just as ‘a human face is not only defined by its fixed features but by its mobility of expression and the changes that befall it with passing time’. This echoes Scruton’s approach to musical metaphoric engagement, that it is like a face to face encounter, what Kramer calls ‘metamorphic energy’ (Kramer, 2011:189.)

8.16. These perspectives on meaning, interpretation, language, objects and things within the hermeneutic framework proposed by Kramer provide a sound basis for the three level exploration that this paper proposes. What this paper adds is the taxonomic basis for styles of listening and possible listening repertoires, and structures and processes for enabling responses to music to be articulated and shared. In those senses this research proposal operationalizes Kramer’s hermeneutics.

**9. Anthropology and Ethnomusicology.**

9.1. In anthropology there is a long tradition of ethnomusicology. It is possible to study anthropology and music at SOAS and Oxford University have a Chair in the subject. A recent review noted two main strands of research, first, the use of ‘music’[[14]](#footnote-14) material to further general social theories, and second the production of ethnographic descriptions of particular music practices – ethnomusicology. Anthropology in general is the study of modes of being human, and ethnomusicology is the study of modes of music as a means of expression and as sources of meaning. I now review some of these perspectives for the purposes of this paper, by referring to the work of Judith Becker (2010). In her paper *Exploring the Habitus of Listening* Becker addresses the challenges of cross-cultural exploration in listening. She begins her exploration by examining how some basic problems exposed by anthropology appear in the study of music.

9.2 Becker notes that amongst anthropologists and ethnomusicologists there are those who are *universalists*, who look for commonalities, and *particularists,* who are interested in how we differ from one another. This will be apparent when we consider concepts of ‘music’, of the listening ‘self’, the person, and arousal and emotion as social and cultural constructs and as rooted in basic aspects of human consciousness. I have shown already in reviewing social psychological theories of arousal and prototypicality, the danger of splitting between, and within, these theories such that autonomic determinism is thought incompatible with learned and chosen practice repertoires, when both can be the case. It would be unfortunate if the exploration of listening and the construction of musical meaning were approached using a facile distinction between nature (the meaning is inherent in the music) and nurture (music ‘s meaning is what the hearer hears). We should heed the warning from Marlene Dumas not to be forced to decide whether ‘meaning lies in the origin or the destination of the art-work’.

9.3.The tension shows up in our most treasured experiences, the most moving and formative, of our sense of beauty, truth, disclosure and reality – in our aesthetic judgements. When presented with cross-cultural difference, universalists want these high points to be given the status of a common groundedness of human kind, and despite obvious cultural differences want to argue, that our conversation with ‘others’ is predicated on a shared intelligibility. They will suppose that it is not so much that we can agree on what is beautiful but that the experience of appreciating beauty is shared, even when a culture seems not to have a concept ‘beauty’ or even ‘music’. We also have a desire that our most cherished encounters with beauty are in some sense an encounter with ‘something’, the Real, and we are downcast when we have our experiences explained away as either an evolutionary adaptation or a local cultural artefact. The challenge is to hold a tension between accepting that arousal by sound as music is universal and also that cultural variety harnesses its power for different effects and meanings. Since we in the ‘Euro-American’, ‘western’ tradition are ourselves situated and not an independent arbiter in this tension, it is worth noting its formative and differential power in our discourse. The critical underlying tendency is duality, dichotomous thinking and splitting. The following quotes from Becker illustrate the point:

But recognition of the fact that thought is always culturally patterned and infused with feelings, which themselves reflect a culturally ordered past, suggests that just as thought does not exist in isolation from affective life, so affect is culturally ordered and does not exist apart from thought (Rosaldo, 1984:137)

I can make no sense of a line of thought which claims that ‘passions’ are culturally defined. From my prejudiced position as a social anthropologist this passage reveals with startling clarity the ultimately radical weakness of the basic assumption of cultural anthropology, namely, that not only are cultural patterns infinitely variable, but that human individuals are product of their culture rather than of their genetic disposition. (Leach. 1981:16)

9.4. It is not just anthropological theory that is at stake here. Our desire for transforming aesthetic wonder and the sublime entails both a desire of freedom from determinative constraint and an encounter that is experienced as ‘natality’ (Jantzen, 2000). The very nature of these aesthetic experiences seems bound up with the sense that they are disclosures of the nature of ‘things as they are’ but under the creative and interpretive process of imagination. The split becomes a paradox. Transformative experiences are created out of recognition, identification, which is also an encounter with some dependably real phenomenon released for us, as it were, through the imagination of another. To engage in the retrospective logic of the post hoc explanation deflates and devalues the experience. We give these experiences and their creation a high value in world-making, leaving the existence of ‘the world’ or ‘one world’ as an open concept. We resist structural and naturalistic explanations when we want to feel affirmed in the newness of such encounters. We hope for the contingency of creativity in our listening participation in the event. We glory in the artifacts we create. We recognise that these ‘passions’ are culturally defined *and* that there is some ‘generative grammar’ (Chomsky, 1979) that creates the enabling conditions for this diversity. We may come to recognise also that our creativity in listening is grown from inter-subjectivity and solidarity, and may have its own discursive trajectory, if shared in language, towards a new sociality – an emergent aurality I call *Music Poetics*.

9.5. Inter-subjectivity is a concept that can assist us in recognising the ‘nested’ gestalt, the necessary interpenetration, inflection of *invention* and *discovery* and avoid splitting them, by simplistic dualisms like ‘objectivity’ and ‘subjectivity’. Our sense of ‘discovery’ and ‘invention’ are the experiential analogues of the split between *universality* (a determinative facticity of the human condition – Leach’s position) and *particularity* (our interpretive world-making – Rosaldo’s position). If we imagine the relationships between the sculptor and the stone, composer and sound, as between two faces looking at each other, we feel the reality of the elision between, what is ‘there’, and what can be ‘made: what is ‘found’ and what can be ‘brought to life’ – discovery and invention. The split in the nature-nurture theory dichotomy when played out and dramatized in this way becomes the source of creative tension rather than a split[[15]](#footnote-15). Inter-subjectivity is the social scaling up of this dyadic conceptual relationship. *Auditory Play* is a practice in which we combine what is ‘there’, found, what seems to have a ‘giveness’, a facticity – symbolised by the grammar and syntax of music – with what we seem to be able to grasp, that belongs to us, with what we *make* of it, what I call the generative creativity that listening enables. This is playing out the same set of relationships in the listening subject (Nancy, 2007) that inter-subjectivity does in the social realm – and one is nested in the other, for what belongs to us does so in what we belong to.

Michael Jackson notes that:

The question of the relationship between the particular and the universal domains dissolves into a set of questions about how the give and take of inter-subjective life in all its modes and mediations – conscious and unconscious, passive and active, inclusive and exclusive, empathetic and antagonistic – prefigures and configures more discursive and categorical forms of relationship (Jackson, 1998:4)

9.6. So how does the duality of cross-cultural diversity and the desire for common solidarity of what it is to be a person, impact on our listening? For example, consider some responses to ‘difficult’ modern classical instrumental music as analogous to responses to, for example, gamelan music from Bali, ‘mouth music’ from Keralla, or the Sufi music of Nusrat Fateh Ali Khan. How do we think of musical sound that we find difficult to hear or make sense of, let alone find beautiful, and when its arousal seems to create unpleasant sensations? It may be that working at our cross-cultural openness relates to our willingness to encounter other challenging sonic worlds from composers in our own culture – we might be able to conclude that these sounds as music are neither ‘unnatural’ nor incommensurable. It is possible to notice when our aesthetic judgements, especially the negative ones, lead us down unhelpful paths towards either the polarity of the export of our ways as *the* universal or by contrast a falling away into cultural pluralism and incommensurability – anything goes, home or away.

9.7. Studies of ‘world music’ in relation to globalisation have found that in fact ‘cultural differentiation tends to outpace homogenisation’ (Appadurai, 2002), by contrast North and Hargreaves (2008) suggest that in studies of pop music which relate complexity, familiarity and pleasure, that ‘financial pressures of the music industry are directly at odds with the notion of composers as innovators’. Globally, aesthetic convergence may therefore not be towards some universal norm *and* locally, convergence seems to be a cultural feature created by ‘the market’. The tension seems to be between the overflowing creativity of listening, responsive, world-making and the desires and habits of familiarity and consumption.

9.8. We can choose to listen therefore in an expanding sonic world or to converge on patterns of familiarity and assured pleasure ­what Charles Taylor calls ‘closed world systems’ (Taylor, 2007). Descriptions of how we do this will require, for ethnographic and hermeneutic purposes, the deployment of a series of analytic concepts such as *habitus, disposition, hexis* and *field* (Bourdieu, 1977), *co-presence* (Giddens, 1984), *co-sentience* (Eco, 1985), *inter-subjectivity* (Jackson, 1988), *play, field and semiosphere* (Neri, 1995). These are all concepts that may help us describe and map a complex, plural inter-subjective matrix of listening and hearing.

9.9. Becker notes that our responses to music are culturally inflected, that we are part of a ‘community of interpretation’, that entails a ‘forestructure of understandings’ for our situated hearing. Two other features are present, first that we acquire our listening habits largely unawares, and that it is only when we are confronted with an alternative kind of listening that we are able to reflect on our conventionalised mode. Becker concludes that ‘we need a term to express the temporal and special situatedness of the hearer that is the aural equivalent of the visual term for modes of seeing; that is the *gaze*’ (Becker, 2010:1290).

9.10. I now sketch some sources from ethnomusicology studies which show cross cultural difference and therefore show our own situated practices and then I consider the conceptual issues and analytic concepts that might assist with Becker’s hope for an aural equivalent of the *gaze*, and which may be relevant for this study.

9.11. There is clearly a significant ethnomusicology literature[[16]](#footnote-16) the challenge is to find ethnographies of listening that can contribute to our exploration. Becker uses five examples: Senegalese Wolof Griots; Hindustani and Bengali sitar, tambura and table in ragas; arousal in Sufi music; Balinese trance music; and Pentecostal Church Music.

9.12. Amongst Griots ‘musical expression of emotion is dialogical and situational, not personal and interior’. Performances are highly expressive in order to impart to nobles energy for the pursuit of their governing duties. Emotions are not personal attributes of either the performers or the listeners and yet are engendered and seen as potent. Emotions here are contrasted with our listening assumptions that emotional responses are characteristic of the bounded inviolate individual. This Senegalese practice breaks such boundaries in order to animate and arouse the public realm.

9.13. In Sufi religious ceremony the objective is to engender ecstasy as joy, which is to become closer to Allah. The Sufi habitus of listening is to sit quietly and reverently, then to be touched by something that appeals to the listener and that is relevant to their personal situation. As this arousal is noticed the leader *qawwal* may repeat the phrase or verse over again. A ‘script’ or narrative emerges and the music changes in intensity as the script progresses, to its full acting out in ‘institutionalised musical ecstasy’ (Becker, 2010). Qureshy, (1986) has charted and mapped these arousal relations showing not only how the musicians interact with the congregants but also how the emotions of one listener may influence the emotions of another leading to a shared enactment of trancing and ecstatic union.

9.14. In Bali an exorcist ceremony requires that a spiritually strong man will, as a result of gamelan music, undergo a trance. Other listeners will also go into a trance, *bebuten,* in which they become enraged. They become ‘crazy’ and attack the mask of the witch *Rangda.* The encounter music is critical to this public exorcism which arouses listeners and leaves them feeling exhausted and embarrassed. This has been described as ‘theo-cidal rage’ which is a social obligation, a surrender of personal comfort to the effects of gamelan music.

9.15. Pentecostal listening is also structured around a script and progress towards an emotional apotheosis. Music is ubiquitous and tracks and creates these narrative effects both personal and collective. Listening has a shape and this is a reflection of the music and the focus of attention. Softly played music, moves to swinging driving choruses, creating a wave of high energy which expresses itself in each individual as dance, jerking, and also trembling, and is simultaneously a sound envelop which contains and offers solidarity pointing as it does to the focus of being in the Spirit.

9.16. The Hindustani listener to Indian *raga* may seem to have some superficial similarities to the listener to Western classical music, stillness, focussed attention and interiority even inner withdrawal. They do share a listening posture of calmness, contemplation and deliberation, however they are not congruent. In raga listening there are culturally constructed categories of affect operative, which inform both the listener and the musical presentation. These representations are of sensibilities: *shanta* (serenity), *karuma* (compassion) *adbhuta* (astonishment) and even *raudra* (anger) or *veera* (heroism). Emotion (*rasa*) in listening to music is not only codified and represented but also requires an impersonal distance. This has been described by McDaniel:

*Bhava* is a personal emotion; *rasa* is an impersonal or depersonalized emotion, in which the participant is distanced as an observer. Why is depersonalized emotion considered superior to a personal one? Because the aesthete can experience a wide range of emotions yet be protected from their painful aspects. Emotion is appreciated through a glass window, which keeps out unpleasantness. Though the glass is clear, thus allowing a union of sorts with the observed object, the window is always present, thus maintaining the dualism. (McDaniel (1995:48).

9.17. The Hindustani listener is exercising a process described by Becker as ‘a refining of emotional essence, a distillation of his or her emotion that will lead to a transformation of consciousness to a higher level of spirituality’ (Becker 2010:136). Emotion, as *rasa*, through listening to music is a stepping stone to a higher gnosis. Intense, not mild aesthetic, emotions lead not just to mystical knowledge but also to life’s meaning and purpose. In the western habitus the listener may be exploring the affective nuances of his or her inner self or identifying with the affective interiors presented by the music, in the Indian raga listening the listener is trying to bring about a kind of ‘sea change’, a transformation of proximity to the divine and a shaping of the self.

9.18. These examples show clearly why it is instructive to understand listening in a cross-cultural way. The Griot case shows how emotional responses to music are a social enactment, a form of corporate interinanimation. The Sufi case shows how narrative interaction with performers shapes the listening posture and that music has both drive, destination and human destiny. The Bali example show the way in which personal arousal by music is part of social healing and that this sociality is created by this personal ‘possession’. In Pentecostal worship the ‘hook’ of the music builds as the listener engages, a script develops, the corporate shape of the sound becomes a driving enveloping musical ‘body’, a sound-Church. Listening to *raga* invites the cultivation of a paradoxically disinterested, distanced emotion which has intense affect but is not primarily aesthetic in its pleasure. The listening engagement with the music is intended to create a transformation of the self in relation to divinity and thereby to the meaning of life. ‘All these habits are acquired through life experiences of interactions with others in similar situation, the emotions are private *and* public, interior *and* exterior, individual *and* communal’ (Becker, 2010:144)

9.19. These cross-cultural examples open up not so much avenues for comparative exploration but draw our attention to our own cultural listening assumptions. I now take up Becker’s challenge to seek concepts of aurality analogous to the visual concept of the *gaze*.

9.20. This paper’ starting point is a narrow field: *concert-going to live music performances of scored, instrumental, classical music.* If we are able to develop ways of exploring this field the findings may enable a broader and more complex set of elements to be included in further studies of musical events, such as: improvisation, of music with words, dance, film etc. The reason for this starting point is to begin with the relationship between musical grammar and syntax and its relationship with semiotics, ie. meanings and interpretations, and to problematize that relationship through the phenomenological distinction between *listening* and *hearing.*

9.21. What concepts might help us theorise aurality? Becker has noted that groups of listeners develop a ‘community of interpretation’ (Becker, 2010) and that they will approach a musical performance with a pre-given set of expectations, a ‘forestructuring of understandings’ (Gergen, 1991). We accumulate these listening habits largely unawares. Modes of listening implicate structures of knowledge and beliefs and notions of personhood and identity. Listening addresses interiors and what is hidden from sight, and is a sense that is constantly enspaced in ambient sound. Listening is already the ability to find signals in noise, and to find pattern in sound, and to imagine meaning in music. Our styles of aural perception, awareness, and listening impinge on our understanding of the emotional content of music. Emotions are not bidden but neither are they ‘natural’ since they ‘take place within complex systems of thought and behaviour’ (Becker, 2010) and are articulated as feelings. [[17]](#footnote-17) Listening is therefore not a simple ability to hear sound but is a *habitus.*

9.22. The concept of *habitus* has its roots in Aristotle’s idea of *hexis[[18]](#footnote-18)* .

The Aristotelian notion of hexis exceeds the strict notion of behaviour and action patterns since it includes both moral actions and practical skills. Virtue and practice merge as the qualities of action depend upon the actor’s excellence: deed and doer merge in action based on practice and ethics. Good and beautiful actions are not therefore sporadic or accidental products; they are “the result of the integration of deeply embodied, acquired and reflected dispositions ­– skill knowledge, and considered choice” (Coessens, 2001:3)

Marcel Mauss took up the concept of *hexis* as the Latin equivalent of *habitus* in charting bodily techniques embedded in social and cultural patterns of action and thought. In his perspective society imprints upon individuals specific embodied patterns on often-unconscious ways, through training, education and mimesis, and these aspects of mastery are self-reinforcing, that is, they will reward individuals’ ways of doing things in a particular way. We can see here that these dispositions are intermingled with skills, controls, learning, and mastery as well as related to norms of behaviour and conformity. The very ‘naturalness’ of listening, walking, eating, sleeping and even manners and table-manners is challenged. The possibility of knowing awareness of these pressures and the resultant choice and virtue in practices is also raised. We might speculate on what virtuous listening practices might be in various fields, such as medicine, psychotherapy, education and in human relations in general. A general characteristic of such virtuous practices is that an encounter with another is enspaced and bounded such that attention is paid to the other. Space and time is given to them to express their experiences, which are received in a charitable and appreciative manner, this is often spoken of as a validating non-judging posture. Silent listening as a practice therefore creates a space in which matters may arise and which may have unexpected resonances.

9.23. Bourdieu developed the concept of *habitus* further. Already we see that it refers to dispositions embedded tacitly in social structures and acquired through socialisation. Bourdieu quipped that the history of Western civilisation could be summed up in the injunction ‘Sit up Straight!’, and one could add to this: the nuances of class identification through table manners; the basic pedagogic requirement that learning proceeds by sitting still and paying attention in a classroom. Much of our listening habitus derives from the classroom. Pedagogic patterns of listening are significant in shaping the listening habitus for music. In school we are required to ‘pay attention’ and that in effect entails both stillness and silence. Listening becomes elided with attention. Attention has four dimensions; *concentration*, giving something serious consideration; i*nterest*, being curious; *giving attention*, which entails care and tending and closely linked to a considerate act; and *attention* as a military posture of obedience. So our *habitus* of listening to music is shaped by pedagogic ideas of *attention.* This as I shall show below, and Szendy has already reminded us in his notions of structural listening, is a somewhat restricted basis for a listening repertoire. Our listening *habitus* also dramatizes power relations as in listening to preachers, teachers, newscasters, and politicians. Bourdieu challenges us to ask ourselves the question ‘Where did we learn to listen the way we do?’

9.24. Bourdieu is developing a concept that can do the work of the concept of ‘culture’. He describes *habitus* as:

The structures constitutive of a particular type of environment (eg. the material conditions of existence characteristic of a class condition) produce habitus, systems of durable, transposable dispositions….that is, as principles of the generation and structuring of practices and representations which can be objectively ‘regulated’ and ‘regular’ without in any way being the product of obedience to rules, objectively adapted to their goals, without presupposing a conscious aiming at ends or an express mastery of the operations necessary to attain them and , being all this, collectively orchestrated without being the product of the orchestrating action of a conductor (Bourdieu, 1977:214)

This precisely what happens in the live concert event where the listening *habitus* is not determined by the conductor. This *habitus* is characterised by the dispositions of listeners and these are both systematic and systemic. Dispositions are ways of being, habitual states, predispositions, tendencies, propensities and inclinations and are tacit. Rules, power and obedience are masked in these dispositions. A *habitus* of listening therefore suggests not a necessity nor a rule, but an inclination, a disposition to listen with a particular kind of focus, to expect to experience particular kinds of emotion, to move with certain stylised gestures, and to interpret the meaning of the sounds and ones emotional responses to the musical events in somewhat predictable ways (Becker, 2010:130). What arises in the *habitus*, in Bourdieu’s terms, is a ‘logic of practice’ in certain defined ‘fields’, such as listening to music but can also be illustrated by the enclosures such as medicine, law or religion.

9.25. For Bourdieu a *habitus* is a socially acquired set of dispositions and embodies schemata which provides a milieu which is pre-adapted to the activities in question. In this case the activities and setting for the concert-going audience. *Hexis* refers to the embodied techniques and skills deployed by participating actors in the ‘field’ of music listening. *‘Affordances’* are those features, the conditions for the possibility of effective listening, that are gifted, made available in the whole event. These include all musical aspects including matters of acoustic positioning, visual sight lines, and the range of other features of the event. Affordances after Gibson (Coessens & Ostersjo, 2014:336) are those potentialities of an environment created by the activities of organisms. They are the range of possibilities opened up for the listener as the listener accommodates to the requirements of what is presented. The ‘logic of practice’ of listening, *hexis,* contains both embodied techniques and skills, *techne* and also *ethos –* the virtuous relationship to ones acts. In an echo of Scruton’s perspective on the moral dimension of listening to music *hexis* is ‘a disposition of the body towards the outer world that is related to artistic virtue by way of purposeful training and perseverance instead of by everyday social and cultural influence and imposition’.

9.26. There is a tension therefore between *habitus* a ‘resistance toward novelty’ (Coessens, 2014) and *hexis* which questions habit through the development of a virtuous skill. *Habitus* allows us to ‘dwell comfortably and thoughtlessly in a socially defined and secure aesthetic space’ (Lachenmann, 2004:56) whereas *hexis* entails agency, resistance, resonance, and a critique of the habits of aural expectation. Thus we will see, below, the link with Nancy’s phenomenological distinction between *listening* and *hearing*, between attending to the world-making possibilities of new patterns in a compositional sonic world (music’s syntax and grammar), and hearing the received sense and meaning of a piece by its exiting construction as something we already know, or know about. The *hexis* of listening includes the ability to listen anew to well known compositions.

9.27. My warrant for adopting this raft of concepts is that they have conceptual and analytic power in defining and demarcating aspects of the cultural practice I wish to explore – listening to live classical musical performance in a concert setting as part of an audience.

The concepts of co-presence and performative ritualization and inter-subjectivity are consistent with the overall concept of the audience as constituting and being constituted as a *habitus* for listening. *Field* in this case refers to the demarcated activity of listening to live classical music – concert-going.

The concepts of co-sentience, resonance, ‘intentional unintentionality’, subjectivity, and the concepts of expectation and appraisal from Huron (2007) are constitutive of the *hexis* of listening. The dimensions of *Auditory Play* theorised below (Section 13) set out a repertoire of listening *hexis.*

*Affordances* is a concept that draws attention to possibilities generated in and by the performative event, its acoustic space and qualities, its setting, its dramatization and reflects the creative and transformative aspects and potentialities of listening as an active interpretive practice. It is related to the concept of *eventness*.

*Ethos* refers to the virtuous discursive relation between listening practices and aesthetic appreciation. Expressions, claims and appraisals in this area depend on a set of related features; an underlying aesthetic which treats objects and experiences as art-works , and an awareness, and articulation of, engagement with the art-work.

9.28. This sketch of anthropological contributions to this project has contributed significantly to our thinking. First, the cross-cultural examples of different approaches to ‘listening’ to ‘music’ has shown wide cultural differences in listening practices and meaning-making. Second, the question of the history and patterns of our own situated aurality have been raised. How does our *habitus* of listening get created? How might it change? Where and how did we learn to listen? Both of these findings support an exploration of listening practices as culturally acquired, and also open to learning and development. This anthropological approach allows us to approach listening as a cultural practice in a non-reductive way. The intrinsic schema of Kant, and the four dimensions of Schopenhauer have been reimagined as *habitus*, as learned cultural practices, yet the tacit nature of their power is still retained. The possibility of changes in listening skills and repertoire, a *hexis*, has been suggested by noting cross-cultural examples of listening practices.

**10. Le Corps Sonore: A Phenomenology of Listening.**

10.1. I have referred to the methodology of this study as being informed by a hermeneutic approach to interpretation, and also as ‘ethnography’ and specifically as developed through a ‘phenomenological’ approach. I now wish to open the topic of the phenomenology of listening to illustrate the usefulness of this approach.

10.2. Doing phenomenological ethnographic enquiry is itself a creative/interpretive activity with a number of paradoxical practices. It mirrors the engagement and participation with the art-work by others. It entails an imaginative capacity to visualise a life-world, *liebenswelt* other than ones own*.* It entails a readiness to encounter difference, novelty, wonder and challenge. It requires this receptivity to be linked with a performers agility and poise in practices of looking/seeing, listening/hearing, embodied movement, and awareness of co-presence with others. It requires substantive knowledge of the focal field of enquiry and the provisional yet robust creation of a theoretical framework which contains within it analytic concepts which might be candidates for explicating what is about to unfold. It then requires the abandonment of dualisms such as inductive/deductive, objective/subjective, and the setting aside of all that I have said so far, so that the participant/ethnographer can engage ‘without memory or desire’ with the art-work and event. Good ethnography is rich in thick description, it is dialogic, giving voices to others. It seeks to celebrate and generate the aesthetic flow by appreciative enquiry not by reductive explanation.

The phenomenological ethnographic approach can be summarised as follows:

For anthropology this implies a practical relativism; the suspension of inquiry into the divine or objective truth of particular customs, beliefs or worldviews in order to explore them as modalities or moments of experience, to trace out their implications and uses. Ideas are not so much discounted as deconstructed; they are seen as approximate expressions rather than exact explanations of experience. The phenomenological method involves ‘placing in brackets’ or ‘setting aside’ questions concerning the rational ontological or objective status of ideas and beliefs in order to fully describe and do justice to the ways in which people actually live, experience and use them - the ways in which they appear to consciousness (Jackson (1996:10).

10.3. So, within the ethnographic accounts of listeners and their interpretive sense-making we expect to find patterns and traces. These patterns are made up from disclosures, hermeneutic ‘windows’ as Kramer refers to them (Kramer, 1993, 2011). We also expect to find judgements about pleasure and aesthetics, and speculate that these will emerge from both intrinsic and extrinsic sources of meaning that may constellate in narratives which will be rich in metaphor and poetic expression.

I now turn to an example of a phenomenological approach to listening, that enables us to generate abstract concepts to theorise, and also to remain rooted in the attempt to articulate the fine grain of experience of listening to music.

10.4 *The Phenomenology of Listening: Jean-Luc Nancy.*

Jean-Luc Nancy sets out a phenomenological framework in his theory of the auricular, in *Listening,* (Nancy, 2007). Here he examines distinction between hearing and listening, their simple natures and their tense, attentive or anxious states. The auditive pair of hearing and listening is explored as a relation, as an analytic, theoretical, distinction, and as a description of experience. *Hearing* has a ‘simple nature’, to ‘hear say’ as in the sense of *entendre* as *comprendre* – to understand. It is receptive, passive and tries to ‘understand the sense’ – its primary focus is comprehension.

10.5*. Listening* is however a ‘tense, attentive, or anxious state’ which is ‘straining’ towards meaning and this posture is at an ‘edge’. Listening to musical sound, to the resonance of sound for itself is a marginal experience, liminal, taking place at a threshold where ‘exterior’ sound is also ‘interior’ resonance. Listening is a disposition where ‘sense not be content to make sense (or to be logos) but that it want also to resound’ (Nancy, 2007:6). Therefore to hear, is to understand the perceived meaning, sense (*sens sense*) in contrast to listening for the ‘perceiving sense’ (*sens sensible*). So, to be listening is to be on the edge of meaning, the sound being nothing but the edge. Listening is an active bodily experience concerned with sense and sensation.

10.6.The distinction between *hearing* and *listening* is not however always easily maintained and this can be imagined by the ambiguity in the word ‘sense’. What Nancy is pointing to is that sense-making emerges though and derives from listening, which requires attention to the sonorous body and its resonance of sound. The distinction between sensation and meaning is what Nancy is opening up, and their relation shows an admixture of sound and sense. This admixture is possible in an embodied engagement with sound which is conceived as meta-literal – that is, sound remains sound as it also constellates as sense through embodied resonance. Music on this account is sound, sensation, bodily resonance and sense-making. Meaning consists in reference and reference here is created in the ‘resounding’ consequences of listening – ‘my whole proposal will revolve around such a fundamental resonance’ – where sound, re-sounds in the sonorous body.

Listening opens up in timbre, which resounds in it rather than for it. In truth resonance is at once listening to timbre and the timbre of listening…Resonance is at once that of a body that is sonorous for itself and resonance of sonority in a listening body, that itself resounds as it listens. (Nancy, 2007:40)

Meaning, as linked to hearing is deferred in the space created by listening. Sense emerges as the echo, the resonance, in a given body.

10.7. What Nancy is attempting to do here is open up a phenomenological approach to the practice of listening. To listen is to defer sense-making by being anxious and attentive, to allow ones body to be sonorous, to allow oneself to be on an edge, at the edge of words, to allow sound to resonate in the ear and body, to allow the inner and outer sound to intermingle and the distinction of inside and outside to collapse – to hum and move with sound.[[19]](#footnote-19) The initial sense is therefore in the resonant sound, the listener has deferred grasping or creating a point of reference – a semantic meaning.

To be listening is always to be on the edge of meaning, or in an edgy meaning of extremity, and as if the sound were precisely nothing else than this edge, this fringe, this margin – at least the sound that is listened to, that is gathered and scrutinised for itself. Not, however as an acoustic phenomenon (or not merely as one) but as a resonant meaning, a meaning whose sense is supposed to be found in resonance, and only in resonance. (Nancy,2002:7)

Put simply Nancy is suggesting that before sound and music become meaningful in any semantic way that there are significant ways in which listening and sensation have to do with sense-making, this musical sense being prior to our articulations of it in words.

10.8. The creation of the sensing subject and the reflexive seeking self are also implicated in Nancy’s notion of listening. To be listening will be to be aware of the self – *we hear only ourselves* (Bloch in Dyer, 1996). Listening and resounding in the body makes the self a presence to self, but this is not a self as objectified or as ‘being’. As vibrations move between inside and outside the sensing listening subject is on the lookout for a subject (not falling back into the heard meanings) something that identifies itself as an echo in the other. The music makes sense as it resounds and addresses itself in the self. This idea that listening as a practice constructs the subject, the self, is also noted by Kramer and by Scruton. Here Nancy creates a picture of self-reference, a hearing of the self, a feeling of being penetrated by sound and the subject object relationship being located within the body in the self-consciousness. There is even a playfulness of listening as one also listens to oneself resonating, and this feature is included in my listeneing taxonomy set out in Section 13 below. This effect has been ‘caused’ by ‘exterior’ sound moving towards and into the body. Listening – the opening stretched towards the register of the sonorous, then to its musical amplification and composition – can and must appear to us not as a metaphor for access to the self, but as the reality of this access, a reality consequently “indissociably ‘mine’ and ‘other’, ‘singular’ and ‘plural’, as much as it is ‘material’ and ‘spiritual’ and ‘signifying’ and ‘a-signifying’” (Davies, 2011). It is worth noting here the contrast in the depth of these descriptions with the social psychological use of the crude concept of ‘arousal’. Here Nancy is providing a thick description of the inter-relationship between body and consciousness as it leads both to a sense of self, and to meanings. Since other commentators such as Johnson note the way in which shape and contour of music simulates bodily movement, and Kramer speaks of music ‘unfolding’ in narrative time in the way it is ‘followed’, a sense of how listening becomes a performative act clearly emerges.

10.9. Nancy is composing a listening subject (not an objective self as being) in a sonorous present (which is not a point in time) and this is a relational space in which what is mine/interior and other/exterior moves as a changing figural gestalt – auditors sometimes refer to being ‘transported’. I will suggest below, this is a relational space in which the qualities of such co-sentience in co-presence also have a containing, ritual and ‘gathered’ dimension as ‘atmosphere’ (Neri, 1998).

10.10. *Hearing* in the sense of grasping meaning is therefore a foreclosure of the openness of listening and its possibilities. Listening establishes a register of ‘presence to self’ which is opening, and ‘in the presence of’, not self as ‘being’ but a sentient process of ‘coming’, ‘passing’ and ‘extending’. Music enables this by its presence in the present – ‘it is a present in waves on a swell. Not a point on a line; it is a time that opens up’ (Nancy, 2007: 12,13.). Nancy is here linking listening to music to our sense of temporality. We are invited to imagine that the edge is itself moving and passing, going forward and becoming lost – as a wave. This is a sense of being in a moving present that is nowhere. As the coalescing of exterior/outside with interior/inside in the movement of sound adds to this sense (and Nancy notes that we can close our eyes but not our ears), and what is ‘mine’ and what is ‘other’ are also elided, we see the cumulative aspects and effects of what Nancy calls *listening*.

10.11. In offering a phenomenological perspective on listening Nancy is using language both as an attempted description of making sense of experience and also providing some analytic concepts to do so. His prose is therefore necessarily challenging as we as readers move between these two registers of reading. His perspective is useful in bringing certain aspects of listening to our attention. His distinction between listening and hearing opens up exploration of their relation, and the oscillation between them and their ambiguity in sense-making. The embodied, resonant listener on the edge of sound and sense is penetrated by moving sound and therefore finds mine/inside and other/outside elided. The listener constitutes and is constituted by this co-sentience/co-presence with the body/corpus of the audience. The listener becomes aware in a moving, present, temporality of the listening self, of an open becoming (open to ‘things as they might be’) not as a finished being (an object in relation to the musical object) [[20]](#footnote-20). The definition of the object or referent of the music is resisted, sematic expression is deferred, by listening practices, sense constellating though these registers and emerging as sense-making later – if at all?

10.12. Nancy has made play with the metaphor of ‘resonance’. This is not however entirely metaphorical. Since listening to music is a bodily affair the resonance is not simply a cognitive trace but an actual literal sensation. I want to link this conceptual and linguistic problem to another feature of listening to live music – that it is a corporate activity. I have noted that the audience is a social system, a *habitus* and that this has certain consequences in the production of co-sentience, co-presence, and systemic features such as atmosphere, and also entails ‘dispositions’ which are shaped by certain ritual aspects and also by the ‘subject-position’ proffered by the animateur/conductor of the musical event. Can we bring together the personal practices described by Nancy with these group features? I suggest that in my emerging taxonomy of listening styles that ritual and corporate listening are overlapping ways of listening, and I expand on this below.

10.13. The distinctions between listening and hearing, and the concepts of resonance and the sense of the becoming self, that Nancy develops are fruitful in opening up a conceptual space for a study of listening. We can also note that the phenomenological approach is closely related to a participatory way of conducting anthropological fieldwork and engaging with subjects and subject matter. This in turn is linked to the kind of recording documentation and ethnographic material that emerges. It may also influences the style of written accounts, what I call *Music Poetics.*

**11. Arousal, Emotion and the Social Psychology of listening.**

11.1. Social Psychological studies have focussed both on the listener and on the music to try to establish listening patterns or types. A series of binary distinctions are made. For example, a distinction is made between, *objective analytic* and affective approaches to music listening (Hargreaves and Coleman 1981). Hedden (1973) used the twin concepts of *associative* and *cognitive* listening. This is consistent with Smith’s argument (1987) that non-expert listeners use *emotional and referential* approaches whereas experts use a *syntactic* strategy. These seem also to suggest a distinction between perceptual, emotional engagement that fits within a theory of ‘arousal’ (Berlyne, 1971) and ‘prototypical’ theories of listening whereby music activates relevant pre-existing cognitive representations (Martindale, 1996). This distinction between what we might tag, ‘arousal/pre-perceptual reactions’ and ‘syntactic, prototypical, cognitive’ ways of listening may be simplistic. These ways of listening may be overlapping rather than dichotomous, and not mutually exclusive. Below where I discuss a taxonomy of listening styles I will take up this issue, in short the way in which reception of music entails both limbic/autonomic systems and cognitive systems simultaneously, an overdetermination in terms of *causes,* and also that listeners ‘inherit’ a listening habitus but also learn a repertoire of listening strategies – *reasons* for listening in certain ways. These observations enable a more detailed appraisal of how meanings and interpretations constellate as words and how the hermeneutic process takes place.

11.2. Spitzer’s framework on understanding and meaning in music is built largely on ‘prototypical’ schematic foundations, using metaphor as the keystone. These findings seem to sit within and reflect a series of conceptual relations; between perception and cognition; between the grammar/syntax of music and its semantic articulation; between listening and hearing. These strands are somewhat dichotomous in the research reported yet their relations clearly point to a research strategy that looks precisely at these relations. ‘Arousal’ theories and ‘prototypical’ theories each have interesting research outputs. For example the first case, Brauneiss (in Moss, 2013) has produced a detailed analysis of emotional cues in Part’s *LamenTate* as it expresses a range of evolving emotions, and these have been produced as a graphic (Minors, 2013:143). In the second case I have noted already Spitzer (2004) builds a complex theory of schema and metaphorwhich relates prototypical patterns to emergent meaning.

11.3. Indeed the most promising studies for our purposes are ones that allow such connections. Ellis and McCoy (1990) suggest that listeners analyse music effectively when they are ‘field independent’ that is to say they are capable of concentrating on specific parts of whatever they perceive. This suggests a modal ability, a figural focal ability, a breadth of repertoire and also a sense of depth suggested by a study by Lewis and Schmidt (1991) that found that ‘intuition’ provides ‘sensing’ with depth. I say, ‘for our purposes’, because my emerging framework for listening is based on the dynamics suggested by ‘field independence’. The proto theory I develop here is that listeners engage in in ‘play’ when listening to music and that this is a non-linear and modal repertoire of ways of paying attention and not paying attention, that is to say self-variability in the oscillation between sensing perception and focal cognition, and in a number of interacting modes of engagement. The central concept here is that listening to live music is not metaphorically ‘play’ it ***is*** play, it is performative, it is a ‘listening act’ in the way in which J. L. Austin conceived ‘speech acts’, that is to say it constitutes the conditions for its realisation, and changes the state of affairs. *Auditory Play* therefore entails the ability to move between modes of attention/inattention – (inter-play) and to combine elements in holistic sense-making (play-making).

11.4. Social Psychological theories are undoubtedly of value and interest, and as they develop into more complex models have greater explanatory potential.

**12. The Construction of Silence.**

12.1. Silence is the ground that joins listeners and performers in a musical event. Keeping co-present silence as a body of listeners is the context [[21]](#footnote-21) in which the music event takes place. Silence is not just a key characteristic of audiences but is also connected to intra-musical silence which is an element as potent as melody, harmony, rhythm or timbre. Practices of listening entail practices of being silent. Being silent itself masks a many nuances: of being silenced, by the normative inhibitions of the concert habitus; by conventions such as not clapping between movements; of waiting and expectancy; of being still and stilled; of being the first musical element that encloses and makes corporate the listening body; of knowingly holding and keeping the silence as if it were both a precondition for listening and as a shared musical element in itself. Silence is, as John Cage discovered, absolutely impossible, it is socially constructed as a listening practice.

12.2. Jankelevitch (2003) in his seminal book, *Music and the Ineffable* describes a number of different dimensions of silence in music. Silence is from where sound comes and to where sound goes, music emerges in silence to have its being, becoming, its beginning and end. This may seem a trivial observation until one experiences it in practice. The listener settles, in stillness and anticipation – ‘silence is a precursor, an advance runner: silence as an annunciation of the storm’. The listener composes herself in various ways: in memory of the known piece; in expectation of novelty; waiting for immersion, to let the sound/music ‘wash over’ me; in focal attention to musical form, structure and pattern; or in an empty space – the ‘lacunae’ that Szendy refers to; an empty and receptive pre-cognitive ‘space’ characterised by ‘intentional unintentionality’ (Humphrey and Laidlaw, 2001) – being without memory or desire. Silence is the space in which we notice our impatience, our distracting commitment to busyness and utility, and our desire for focal objects. To be personally silent raises these questions. To participate in constructing silence raises a further series of possibilities.

12.3. The creation of silence by both audience, performers, conductor, and indeed composer is the ritual creation of a ground, ‘the blank backdrop, the fabric upon which the noises of life and nature and music ultimately inscribe themselves’ (Jankelevitch, 2003:130). Silence here is the ground and destination, and unwritten page that gradually fills up with tumult. There are two conceptualisations here. The first is the idea that silence has some kind of ontology, that it has its own being and is not just the gap in speech or sound. The second is that it is a potentiality, a surface upon which we can both read our own creations and those of others, a common ground for disclosure. Silence speaks to us of both presence therefore, what arises in the silent space and time, and absence, what is not said, implied but absent. In this sense silence envelopes what happens in time into ‘oblivion, which is a kind of silence, only a few distant memories will remain floating, and they in turn are attenuated little by little and finally disappear completely’ (Jankelevitch, 2003:131). In this process, where music gradually exhausts its particular combinations of sounds, we experience change, mutability, moving from one state to another in time. We come and go as music comes and goes. Silence enables time, movement and displacement, in its interaction with music we are able to be present, absent or elsewhere. We are minding this gap in time. This is time differentiated from linear time. We can distinguish anterior silence and consequent silence and they are asymmetric in performance just as birth and death are. As Barenboim notes in *Sound and Thought* (Barenboim,2008:8) ‘the disappearance of sound by its transformation into silence is the definition of its being limited in time’.

12.4. Silence is the origin and ground, the screen, the space of becoming, the point of oblivion, or where the traces of musical memory recall a time suspended in (in)attention.

The audience thus composes itself, creating the habitus of silence. The animateur, the conductor is the boundary manager of silence, determining with exquisite precision when music will begin, be interrupted, paused, faded and stopped, and of the qualities of harmonic resonance that will hang in the air in these crafted spaces. Silent poise is what is shared by all, audience, performers, and conductor.

12.5. Jankelevitch then turns this economy on its head. Music becomes an ‘island of sonority’ upon which ‘creatures of distraction beguile away the anguish of solitude’ – ‘like a traveller lost in the night who talks to persuade himself he is not afraid’. Silence is shadowy. In the example of the works of Franz Liszt he notes:

Epic pomp and triumphal glare find themselves gradually invaded by silence with approaching old age. A maternal silence enters into every pore, long pauses come to interrupt recitatives, great voids, empty staves and rarify each note, detach it from all others…nothingness like the encroaching sand invades the melody, desiccates its verve (Janlelevitch, 2003:134)

We break silences for comfort, yet silence inexorably enters and corrupts us.

12.6. Barenboim notes these intra-musical tensions created by silence. He quotes Beethoven’s Pathetique Sonata, Op. 13 where sound arising out of silence is evolution, a gradual alteration of an existing condition, as it interrupts the silence, and by contrast in the piano Sonata Op. 109 where the music seems already to exist so that when the pianist plays it seem that the sound joins something pre-existent. He describes the relationship between sound and silence as the relationship between a physical object and gravity. Music is as it were, raised from the ground by its own power, and is brought into the world. Sustaining the sound is an act of will and defiance against the pull of silence.

Each note must be aware of itself but also of its own boundaries; the same rules that apply to individuals in society apply to notes in music as well. When one plays five legato notes, each fights against the power of silence that wants to take its life (Barenboim, 2008:10).

This is a tension between the note and the phrase, each note wanting to assert itself in relation to the others and against the abyss of silence. It life is poised properly in its place in the phase, it is against the possibility of oblivion that it struggles to have its place, yet it is a struggle to be in the nature of the phrase to which it belongs. Music has the possibility of total silence which is a temporary death followed by its capacity to revive and begin life anew.

12.7. I have noted that silence is a key element in the ritualization and creation of the listening habitus for all the participants in the drama of a live musical event. The multitude of postures and modes of attentiveness of listeners is contained in the silence as listeners are both constituted by this habitus and constitute the conditions of the possibility for a musical event to take place. Silence precedes and contains the musical event but has a range of metaphorical and even metaphysical resonances: of ground, of screen, of gravity, as a marker of beginnings and endings, as suspense. Its intra-musical relationship to musical sound is tensive, it becomes the expressive space before, between and after notes, water surrounding the secure island of sound, and the element within which, and against or in relation to which, notes and phrases must assert their lives and will.

12.8. My primary focus here is on listening and its relationship to silence: the silence that is kept by the listener, the meanings of silence that might derive from the listening style an from engagement with silences within musical performance. In order to develop these two strands I draw on a study of silent practices in Quaker worship, and then consider a celebrated case of ‘silent’ music – 4’33’’ by John Cage.

12.9. Quaker listening practices may offer some interesting perspectives on listening to music. Quakers consider silence to be a potentially disclosive dimension of reality. Some even posit an ontology for silence, almost getting to the point of eliding silence as a characteristic of divinity to being the ‘face’ of divinity itself, an unusual shift from the idea that God is silent or has the characteristics of silence to having the medium of silence as the way of disclosure. This is reinforced by the idea that our human limitations necessitate our engagement with the divine through our silence. This episteme and means of engagement, also creates the conditions for the possibility of non-silence, that is some inspirational disclosure that seems to arise within and because of the silence itself, and through the practices of silent listening. Whether one grasps the paradox of silence and disclosure the listening practices are of interest.

12.10. There are a range of related practices that are closely linked to keeping silent and bear on the preparedness of the listener to ‘hear’. The worshipper learns to wait, to be patient, and to be still. Breathing, posture and attentiveness are part of this practice. Quakers hold differing views on the practice that they all refer to as ‘centering down’. This is the practice that combines waiting, patience, silence, stillness, and is essentially a receptiveness and openness to what might rise within the silence. Some Quakers take the view that the practice entails the preparation of ‘heart and mind’ and therefore a meditative approach is useful. This may involve focussing on particular matters that become apparent in ones preoccupations and ‘holding them in the Light’, that is to say accepting that one can be mindful of them, that they are not simply to be pushed aside, but that they can as it were be placed in relation to the silent practice. They are partially redeemed potential distractions or may become thereby the very concern that arises in the silence. This approach can also entail specific attention to words as text from some appropriate source. This practice of ‘centering down’ is substantive and meditative.

12.11. Other Quakers, by contrast, practice the setting aside of mental and emotional activity and content in order to achieve an empty receptivity. Some Quakers use practices such as the Bhuddist ‘mindfullness of breathing’ both to calm the mind and body and to create conditions for contemplation rather than meditation. This is terminus of the apophatic theological tradition of the ‘via negativa’ which draws on mystic practices of negation, that is that all statements about the divine must be ‘unsaid’ since thy will fall short of, and will be a distorting impression of the divine. Nothing can be said that has not been ‘heard’ through this medium. These are personal and private practices. However they are performed in a group and this is critical to the creation of the possibility of disclosure. First, because the group is *co-present* and *co-sentient*, second because what arises in silence is not only a function of the group but is also to be worked with by the group as a whole. If some worshipper is given to speech in the silence there is a receptive and interpretive audience. In the first aspect the conditions for the words to arise are related to what is called ‘gatherdness’ this combines feature of *co-presence,* that individuals are there precisely to be with others in a formal way, ritualistically, irrespective of who they are, and *co-sentience* which refers to the fellowship, intimacy of the human group as a kind of art-work, bringing their whole being into the creation of the event. Thus through *co-presence* and *co-sentience* the *corpus* is made. It is this fertile ground onto which words might fall and therefore their meanings will emerge from the receptive listening that is being practiced. Since there is no dialogue or exchanges between participants in the event, the words stand, again like an art-work that arrives and has its presence in the event. The words may be followed by others and shapes and themes may emerge, and they may also be informed by a vocabulary and phrases which have had a resonant meaning over past years and have the aphoristic power of an oral tradition which sediments and preserves insights that have stood the test of time. Silence and speech in a Quaker meeting for worship is analogous to the combined elements of music in a concert performance. They present themselves for embodied understanding and interpretation.

12.12. What becomes apparent in Quaker listening practices is that silence is *created* as well as dwelt within. This has several consequences for our understanding of listening in relation to silence, First silence is kept and made by individuals in co-presence, they agree to embody stillness and the other waiting disciplines and what emerge is ‘silence’. This has the consequence that silence is not only literal, but can be understood as a symbol or metaphor, in this case for the divine ­– it is both at once. Coleman (2007) has coined the concept of *meta-literal* to refer to this kind of intrinsic duality. Here the power of the literal aspect is retained and in its metaphorical form also has cognitive content without the necessity to reduce it to its literal base in order for that meaning to be justified. This echoes Johnson’s view noted above of the way that music is not like language, but imitates language. Music is both specific embodied literal sound-making and carries its metaphorical meanings. Consideration of listening and silence therefore allows us to grasp better Johnson’s position on the relationship of music to language, and Spitzer’s view of the role of metaphor in Kramer’s hermeneutics of music.

12.13. What do these practices suggest to us in relation to listening to live music? I consider that they map onto, and inform, secular listening practices in many ways. The differing practices of ‘centering down’ reflect different modes of engagement. Some listeners find program notes useful other find them distracting. Do we as listeners intend to meditate about the music or allow our contemplation to be led by it? These do seem to be somewhat different postures. The disciplines adopted by Quakers can be seen in the concert hall amongst audiences: stilling, being quiet, bringing oneself to a receptive state of (in)attention. My thesis of *Auditory Play* and the modes described there includes, in the mode *Ritual Listening,* many of the practices that Quakers adopt in listening to silence. The listening audience as a social system produces through co-presence and co-sentience the conditions for the musical event. Insofar as the members are corporate and compose themselves they constitute an art-work.

12.14. The shift from sentience, sensation, raw experience to intelligibility and meaning, from a managed perceptual perspective to cognitive and discursive reflection is also illustrated in this Quaker example. In Quaker practice this is undertaken separately from the event of worship, but uses the same economy of silence, single contributions, and corporate discernment by the same way in which the listening is practiced in worship. In this proposal the *Active Listening Groups* are imagined as spaces in which the listening and resonance of the music as subjectivity and inter-subjectivity, (the becoming of the reflective self noted in the work of both Nancy and Johnson above) becomes forged as a cultural sensibility in how we listen to other accounts of others’ listening – to imagine how they heard it, what ‘arrangement’ they made (Szendy, 2008). The activities of these groups could be called aesthetic discernment.

12.15. I now turn to another source of insight into silence located in the sphere of musical performance, the celebrated or notorious 4’33 by John Cage. Late in the evening of August 29th 1952 at the Maverick Concert Hall in the Catskill mountains, where there were as many seats outside the hall for listening as inside. David Taylor, a pianist, sat down at the piano, closed the keyboard and began to ‘play’ 4’33’’. He turned the pages, and twice during the period lifted and lowered the keyboard, no notes were played and the piece ended after 4 minutes 33 seconds. There was and is a score with markings for the different silences.

12.16. What was Cage doing? Before we try to answer that question we must step back and consider that creative acts do not determine their results. Cage did not know what the event would be like neither did he know what listeners’ reactions would be. We know from those who were present I the first performance that in the first movement you could hear the wind outside, that during the second raindrops were heard falling on the roof, and that the audience started making some sounds during the third movement and some talked and some walked out. Some were angry. Rothstein in his Obituary of Cage suggested that it would have worked if Cage had ‘told people what to do’. But do we know what Cage wanted people to do? Cage certainly did not mean a deliberate provocation, a deceit, a hoax. What he did mean and what he thought the piece came to mean are subject to endless speculation. This is also then a case where seeking composer’s intent is questionable. Gann (2010) asks if we are intended to understand it: in what sense is it a composition, is it a joke, a piece of Dada, theatre, a thought experiment, the apotheosis of C20th music, and example of Zen practice, or an attempt to change our attitudes to music?

12.17. It was certainly an act of reframing. That is, it enclosed environmental, ambient, exterior and unintended sounds in the frame of a musical performance. In that sense it was not about silence, but a realisation of its impossibility. It raises thereby the issue of what are ‘unwanted’ sounds that intrude into musical performance, and it blurs the distinction between music and sound. But to frame silence *as music* is quite a different matter. Gann suggests that this creates a kind of attention which opens the exploration of silence, sound and music. The reframing of the performance as a performance of listening shifts the creative and exploratory task onto the audience, whilst the performer maintains the frame. An immediate sensation of trickery and mockery attended its first performance, but not in later performances, though Kahn (2003), has noted that in every performance of 4’33’ he has attended, the silence has always been broken by the audience who often become ironically noisy. The ‘silence’ seems to be an invitation to make sound, rather than to be silent. Presumably some listeners ‘get’ the idea of ambient sound, reframed as a musical performance, others become acutely aware of the relationship between sound and silence and become reflective about their listening.

12.18. The refusal to listen simply to what can be heard, or give attention to the listening posture and the qualities of the silent listening space, are all lost in the search for the assumed intended sonic object, which is then supplied by the noisy audience. No audience since the first one in 1952 can consider themselves deceived. There is no sense in which listeners did or do not hear exactly what there is to be heard. It is not a work that substitutes one thing for another but asks what this ‘one thing’ is. On reflection the ‘one thing’ turns out to be a number of responses; to ambient sound; to the reframing manoeuvre; to listening practices; to the urge to find an object of intentional sound. This explains why 4’33’’ still has some artistic standing – in 2004 the BBC broadcast an ‘Orchestral Version’ of 4’33’.

12.19. This reluctance to be thrown back on our own listening resources, and to reflect upon them can also therefore be explored in musical events. Mahler’s insistence on significant silences in his 2nd Symphony (for reasons other that definition of sections and breaks between parts) is rarely honoured. This may be because we: resist the reframing of ritualised events; we do not like codes being disrupted; we do not enjoy having our expectations cast aside; we do not find pleasurable being forced back upon, having to confront, our listening presuppositions and orientations; our listening habitus may have commodified music as a consumable object and our listening relations such that there appears to be no object to consume. 4’33’ therefore deconstructs most of the elements of the musical performance event. It also suggests that composers themselves may be trapped by the expectations of the listening audience’s habitus.

12.20. Cage was certainly framing an art-work, but paradoxically in order to reframe the relationship between sound and music, and to show that this distinction is not solely inherent in the music but also in our perception and expectations of it. So every performance of 4’33’ has its ambient sounds which are incorporated or rejected as musical as we apply the framing of an art work, to it. It is the impossibility of silence that Cage is showing by framing ambient sound in a musically silent piece.

12.21. I have noted above in the case of Quaker listening practices that silence is not only literal (and literally impossible) but that it is a social construction. Silence is kept. Apart from the violation of the norms of relations between performer and audience that takes place in 4’33’’ the silence, the performance shifts to become the property of the audience just as much as that of the performer. When this happens the social construction of non-literal silence becomes clear, the point of privileged utterance or sound-making shifts to the audience. So silence is never total in a literal sense, and is not literal in the frame of musical performance. Silence is the social construction of ambient sound as ‘silence’ which sets the conditions for musical performance, and in this case is the musical performance. 4’33’’ can be understood as the invitation to the audience to knowingly construct ‘silence’. As such it draws attention to the conditions for the possibility of musical performance.

12.22. To return to Rothstein’s point about Cage telling the audience what to do, there are some other clues in Cage’s history about what he sought to explore by 4’33’. We can begin with the paradox of ‘forced listening’, even forcing an audience to listen to ‘silence’. As a form of conceptual listening art 4’33’’ has its Cagean roots in two concerns, Zen and Muzak.

12.23. Gann (2010) recounts that George Squier founded the Muzak corporation in 1934, after inventing a method for transmitting a phonograph along electrical power lines. He developed a ‘piped ‘ music system for restaurants and commercial premises. Muzak made it own compositions based on standard styles to fit the 78rpm ten-inch discs which were transmitted, these were 4.5 minutes long. It was for Muzak that Cage began writing *Silent Prayer*, and as with things Cagean it was both challenging and ironic for Muzak.

12.24. The other strand comes from Cage’s reading of Huxley’s *The Perennial Philosophy* and his subsequent interest in Zen Buddhism and his contact with Daisetz Suzuki a Zen teacher. Cage related the sitting meditation zazen to his composition, noting that he wanted to find: ‘a means of writing music as strict with respect to my ego as sitting cross-legged’. The zazen sitter is ‘asked to focus on breathing, slowly in and out, and only to register sensory impressions that are immediately present, which if the eyes are closed means primarily whatever sounds may occur in the environment’ (Gann, 2007:143). Cage was fascinated by the possibility of a musical sartori, the state in which one might:

..give the same attention to the whir of the wind in the oak tree or the pulse of the ceiling fan that you turn to the melodies of the pianist, then you may have a few moments of realising that the division you habitually maintain between art and life, between beautiful things and commonplace ones is artificial, and that making it separates you off from life and deadens you to the magic around you’ (Gann, 2007:145).

Cage read Huxley’s chapter on *Silence* where he quotes the theologian William Law: ‘the spiritual life is nothing else but the working of the Spirit of God in us, and therefore our own silence must be a great part of our preparation for it’. This influence and his interests in the Zen view of the limited ego and the nature of the Self, provide another aspect of the backdrop to 4’33’, providing us with further interpretive possibilities.

12.25. Gage was asking the ‘silence’ of 4’33’’ to open up and carry many different possibilities. A particular paradox seems to have escaped Cage. The reframing device: ‘silence’ as a musical score and performance, hopes to retain the artifice, the frame which signals its status as an art-work, at the same time as violating the norms of listening to live music. Cage wants to suggest that the difference between art and life is artificial but 4’33’’ is dependent on that very artifice of framing ‘life as art’ in order to do so. Did Cage fully understand this paradoxical contradiction, or is it part of the enduring puzzle of 4’33? What is clear is that Cage was concerned with the listening practices of hearing the ‘thing itself’ whatever that physical or sonic phenomena might be – the ‘plop’ of the frog jumping into the water in the famous Basho Haiku; the whir of the wind in the oak tree. He was trying to collapse time into the immediacy of this identification with the physical phenomena, and in the case of music Kahn suggested that this aspiration, following Kant’s notion of the thing itself, might be termed ‘the ding-a ling-an sich’ (Gann:2007:141). Through all these interpretations I suggest that 4’33’’ is a commentary on listening in constructed ‘silence’.

12.26. The paradox played out well in Cage’s protest against Muzak. *Silent Prayer* was intended as 4.5 minutes of respite from forced canned music. 4’33’’ was written in 1952 at the same time that the American Courts were ruling as to whether there was a right to silence, and whether ‘forced listening’ to music in the work place, on public transportation, or in commerce was a violation of the First Amendment. The case for a right to silence was made at a District Court citing the aspects of ‘forced listening’ and the exploitation of a ‘captive audience’ through ’assault on the unavertable sense of hearing’, and a previous Supreme Court opinion that a constitutional right ‘embraces not only the right of a person to be free from physical restraint, but on the right to be free in the enjoyment of all his faculties’ and the ‘one who is forced to listen is not free in the enjoyment of his faculties’ (Gann, 2007:132). The case went to the Supreme Court in 1952 and was lost. 4’33’’s ‘silence’ became the anti-symbol of forced captive listening.

12.27. Cage was confronted after the first performance of 4’33’ with another paradox.

He visited Harvard University in 1951 and asked to enter their anechoic chamber. He had been working on the assumption that sound and silence were opposites, here in the chamber he claimed to hear his is nervous system and blood circulation, (actually this is impossible and Cage is thought to have been suffering from tinnitus). However the experience convinced him that composing silence was an impossibility. This meant the acceptance of ambient sound, and the acceptance, also of that fact, one that that Quakers understand in their co-sentient worship, that ‘silence’ is itself a social meta-literal construction, indeed, can itself be an art-work as a listening practice.

12.28. Finally, the discussion around 4’3’’ enables us to make two further observations. First, that when audiences listen to ‘silence’, and compose themselves certain features of their corporate presence and endeavours become apparent. The audience as a ritualising social group creates relations between individuals. As in the Quaker example this corporate sense is a ‘gatheredness’ , an entrainment, a sense of shared purpose which creates relations between people. This can be called ‘relatedness’ as contrasted with the character of personal relationships. Listening to music together creates this kind of ‘communitas’ and solidarity because it focuses on a ‘third dimension’ the art-work, or in the Quaker case, the Light/Spirit. This relatedness is the result of an interpersonal gift, ones personal silence is the part of the whole silence. This also means that we are constituted by what we constitute and this has a defining effect both on the nature of the audience as social system, its communitas, and the conditions for ‘eventness’. Second, that the musical element of silence seems to have some connection with a sense of presence and absence, and this is also felt as the ground of music’s possibilities – what precedes music and to which it returns. Can we add silence to the raft of musical elements, melody, harmony, rhythm, timbre as that which presages a transcendent reading?

**13. A Taxonomy of Listening Modes: Auditory Play.**

13.1. So far in these essays I have been considering the understandings of listening that arise from a number of disciplines and doing so within a three-fold structure which distinguishes: the personal and collective practices of listening; the articulation of hearing in languaged accounts; and shared aesthetic discourse. These distinctions can usefully be maintained analytically but are overlapping and connected in practice. Further I have noted that listening to, hearing, responding to and sharing the experience of live music performance is a plural activity not only in its *habitus* (eventness, ritual, and the audience as social system) but also in its *hexis* and *techne* – its logic of practice. By this I mean that our repertoire of listening is modal and plural, that we have a repertoire of ways of listening, hearing, and articulating, and that we move between them both knowingly and also unconsciously.

13.2. Listening is an overdetermined activity and its multiple modalities include the activities of limbic systems of which we are generally unconscious (but may be brought into awareness by certain disciplines), autonomic reactions, and our repertoire of ways of listening. This is a mixture of causes and reasons. The repertoire itself includes our personal predilections, the listening habitus of our collective history of aurality and learned musical knowledge. Overlapping sensory, perceptual and cognitive systems converge to produce effects. Cognition oscillates between drawing on prototypical underlying schema and novelty and creativity: causes/reactions interact with reasons/responses. Exploring listening practices opens up key questions as to how we move from sensation to sense-making: how does musical meaning and interpretation arise. We require a perspective that is able to sit comfortably with complexity and its interconnected matricies.

13.3. Therefore here I scan the most interesting perspectives on listening reviewed in this paper and then attempt to construct a model of *Auditory Play.*

Szendy noted, from Adorno the difference between ‘structural listening’ to the totality of a sound event and ‘plastic listening’ which allows for wandering an inattention. There are other binary distinctions, for example, between ‘objective’ and ‘affective’ listening noted by social psychologists. I have also noted the range of ways of ‘paying attention’ and features such as anticipation and expectation from the work of Huron. In discussing the works of Scruton and Kivy I noted that emphasis can be on listening to music as formal patterns or as analogous to encountering a ‘face’ and unpacked as metaphor. Listening can also be a process of recognition and familiarity with certain sounds that create an appropriation and identification so close that it becomes, as it were, part of our sense of ourselves –‘our song’. Nancy also reminds us that resonating with music can reflexively turn us towards a sense not only of our own particularity, as a self, but also sharpen our collective differences, and that this becomes a richer sense of our inter-subjectivity. Even Schenker’s approach can be inverted by exploring the surface features and the middle ground of the soundscape of music by the kinds of disciplines that Oliveros suggests of global, focal and ‘deep’ listening which does not equate ‘deep’ with underlying structures. Since all these perspectives appear to have validity within their own terms of reference, a model of listening practices will need to be inclusive, and be able to distinguish them possibly as preferences, but also show how they might relate to each other, and even interpenetrate each other.

13.4. Spitzer (2004) begins his study *Metaphor and Musical Thought* with a short two-note example. He suggests that there are three ways of listening to the simple figure. His first ‘listening type’ hears the figure as harmonically structural, as one note providing the base and orientation for the other, which becomes as it were ‘decoration’. This resolves the way in which the notes float in space, they are heard as settled in relation to an underlying implied harmonic structure. The second listening preference is to hear the notes as ‘temporally contiguous’, as a kind of oscillation, with an emerging strong and weak beat. This listening is less spatial and structural and more atuned to temporality. The third listening type is to hear the two notes as a ‘linear unfolding’ within a ‘goal oriented continuum’. Here the notes move from one space to another in a dynamic flow. He summarises these listening types as: *focus on contrapuntal texture, vertical harmony and architectural structure; focus on metrical pattern; and focus on melodic movement in time towards a goa*l. Spitzer then makes a number of assertions. He claims that we can be ‘prompted’ or can decide to hear the figure as we wish. He suggests that listening is ‘never an act of unmediated perception’ but is ‘hearing as’.

13.5. If this is the case then perception is, inextricably, also cognition, and cognition by ‘hearing sounds as music’ (Scruton, 1999), and this ‘hearing as’ is accomplished by metaphor and it is metaphor that will enable our imaginative sense-making of music to be expressed. This listening is perception informed by knowledge. This knowledge includes our cultural history of aurality. Yet this hearing as also entails the imaginative and creative use of metaphor. Spitzer is making two important points here. If perception is conflated with cognition in listening to music and voluntary skills, capacities and choices can be exercised in it, then the determinative powers of sounds as music thought to be inherent in certain sounds, acting on our arousal systems are conceptually, analytically second order in explanatory value in understanding responses to musical listening.[[22]](#footnote-22) That is to say our reactions to sounds as music, possibly autonomic and therefore unconscious, provide simply raw, *reaction* material, providing a repertoire for the cognitive, imaginative, metaphorical sense-making *response* that is the key characteristic of focussed and reflective listening.

13.6. Spitzer’s assertions raise a number of questions. Is it possible, if listening types are voluntary, to develop a discipline and skill of listening that keys into the perceptual before it elides with the cognitive? There are examples from other forms of ‘listening’, which entail a version of Coleridge’s ‘negative capability’ an ‘intentional unintentionality’ (Humphrey & Laidlaw, 2001) which paradoxically attempts to unfocus attention and stay in a receptive perceptual space? I shall give an example of wordless, empty, contemplation (as opposed to substantive meditation) in a religious context below. Is it therefore always the case, as Spitzer claims that ‘musical listening is never an act of unmediated perception?’ Spitzer suggests that to have a listening repertoire of choice, in his example to hear notes alternatively as layered, temporal/rhythmic, and melodic ‘might entail an act of the metaphorical imagination’. He concludes that:

The ‘meaning’ of music to a large extent inheres not within the notes themselves but within a concept we apply to them. “hearing as“, like “seeing as” mixes knowledge and perception. (Spitzer, 2004:10)

13.7. It is clear therefore that as we consider ‘listening’ as a practice we must be aware of these questions. The perspective adopted in this paper is that it may be possible to examine listening practices phenomenologically. This would suggest keeping open the perception/listening ­–- cognition/hearing relationship. The practice of listening might be developed as an ‘intentional unintentionality’, a knowing suspension of semantic articulation, as a discipline of ‘sensation-play’ of pure awareness and sentience. This might lead to the articulation of experience and meaning of listening to sounds as music through the metaphorical imagination.

13.8. Kramer (2011:208ff.) makes some strong claims for the listening that classical music invites. He suggests that classical music listening is a ‘sensitive measure of the kinds of attention that are culturally paramount’. Classical music is characterised by what Paul Ricoeur describes as ‘narrative time’ whereby the meaning of events promises to disclose itself to those who attend closely to the course of events. Kramer contrasts this time to the current dominant model of ‘meaningfulness’ which is the network. This he contends creates and attention style that scans and looks at distributed features rather than concentrating attention and allowing it to ‘be traced along winding courses’. Kramer is arguing that our modes of attention, specifically listening, are highly significant in enabling us to relate to classical music, and that this ability preserves a form of ‘self-fashioning’ for which we are losing the capability. This is the preservation of a mode of perception which requires attention, not necessarily to the totality, but in such a way that the perseverance leads to disclosure, self-reflection, and to a kind of ‘following’ that leads to the desire to interpret. Thus, borrowing from Hayles (2007) Kramer suggests that we should stop conceiving of attention in quantitative terms but seek to understand the difference between ‘hyper’ attention and ‘deep’ attention, in a culture that saturates us in networked and programmable media which requires ‘hyper’ attention. Hayles describes the difference as follows:

Deep attention, the cognitive style associated with the humanities, is characterised by concentrating on a single object for long periods…ignoring outside stimuli whilst so engaged, preferring a single information stream and having a high tolerance for long focus times. Hyper attention is characterised by switching focus rapidly among different tasks, preferring multiple information streams, seeking a high level of stimulation, and having a low tolerance for boredom (Hayles (2007).

13.9. Kramer argues that to take part in deep listening it is necessary to find ‘a position of address’, to approach the experience as ‘narrative time’, to ‘follow’ the music, to allow for reflection and to attempt interpretation. However there is a twist at the end of his prescription, which echoes the critique of Adorno used by Szendy which is the idea that this listening is to a comprehensive totality. To wander in the winding way, but to stay with that, in deep attention is ‘not to hear some hypothetical ‘everything’ but precisely to hear *something* (italics in the original): some process or event that invites pleasure, participation, recognition and interpretation. To this I would add, that we might also benefit from self-awareness of the ways we ‘naturally’ listen, our preferences, predilections, so that the links and relationships that Kramer identifies can become part of the pleasure in curiosity finding different ways of following a winding path and narrative. Kramer’s views about listening styles is consistent with his hermeneutic framework in encouraging interpretation from fragments, partial understandings, and from listeners who are not versed in music theory.

13.10. It seems that we can be both both eccentric wayward single listeners, and social convergent interpretive listeners. It seems that we can choose to pay attention or not to, and knowingly adopt these different listening postures and the results they produce. We can, playfully, latch onto some particular feature that attracts us. Neitzsche who sought the regularity of rhythm, mentioned that when listening to Wagner he wanted to ‘feel the desire to dance’, yet was submerged in ‘swirling meanders of music’s vague torrents and muddled yearnings’:

I can no longer breathe with ease when this music begins to have its effect upon me……my foot immediately begins to feel indignant at it and rebels: for what it needs is time, dance, march; even the young German Kaiser could not march to Wagner’s Imperial March; what my foot demands in the first place from music is that ecstasy which lies in good walking, stepping and dancing (Gros,2014:21)

By contrast I have noted that we have not only our own aural histories but as Szendy and Johnson note, that we are part of an aural history and that regimes of listening are powerful in determining our present listening *habitus*. These observations about our approaches to listening reinforce the idea that there are meanings to be discovered that are generated by our listening posture and that these practices are prior to the substantive understandings of what we say we hear. This consistent with the hermeneutics of Kramer that I discussed in Section 8 above.

13.11. I have also suggested that audiences as social systems are ritualising participants, and I explore here a little further the nature of ritual listening. Lest we think ritual listening, regimes of listening and habitus are simply ‘contexts’ for our personal interpretive drives we can consider an observation by Anthony Burgess in his autobiography :

On a summer evening in London in 1942, on that identical evening in Berlin, there were performances, both deeply moving and loudly applauded, of the Choral Symphony. It was always nonsense to claim that Beethoven’s music was about the brotherhood of man, Jew or gentile, or mystical union with the god of the liberals. If fascist and democrats found, as they did, the same matter for exaltation, then music cannot be about morality. (Burgess,1982:82)

It may be that music is, as Scruton and Johnson contend, the site in which certain moral postures become apparent against the screen of musical performance. I note below a contemporary example of somewhat unexamined regime of listening which relates to the re-spiritualisation of sacred music in a ‘concert’ aesthetic, which naturalises and neutralises the religious content of the music to foreground its aesthetic ‘spiritual’ qualities. Here the music remains the same, yet the listening has changed radically.

13.12. So a focus on listening practices raises a number of interesting issues. We are curious – listening has investigative quality. We recall the suspense and power of ‘sonar bleeps’ in submarines, and the sound of Morse Code in films about WWII. Spying, and listening for radio signals from space all entail a focus through the ear on some disclosure or discovery. Overhearing adults talking as a child, listening at keyholes, or snooping on someone else’s conversations, is to hear illicitly and Shakespeare’s plays are full of such ambiguous (mis)hearings. Whispering is associated with secrecy: audibility with dissemination. Hearing is about expectation, we listen for ‘news’ we ask to ‘hear’ from someone. In all these examples listening requires expectation, curiosity and interpretation. Yet we have found from social psychological studies that we apparently prefer the familiar, that preferences converge collectively, from anthropology that the *habitus* of listening is a powerful shared disposition, and our education which required direct pedagogic listening has told us that the better we pay attention, the clearer matters will be – that listening is a means to a particular end determined elsewhere. But what about the ‘space-time’ of listening?

13.13. Human communication is punctuated by the attentive silence of listening, it creates form, beginnings, endings, breaks, pauses and space, the arc of phrasing and sentences. Listening therefore creates the structure and process, the ‘space-time’ through which language has its communicative potential. Listening entails patient waiting and the ability to amass considerable amounts of information until patterns and possible meanings emerge. Both perception and cognition entail overlapping systems and duplication as between limbic/unconscious awareness of spatiality and movement, and conscious pattern recognition. The purpose of this research is to explore this potential interpretive space, and in ‘action-research’ terms to create awareness of that space and the practices that can develop within it.

13.14. Listening is therefore a practice of convergence and also of openness, of receptivity, of tolerance for what might be unfamiliar. Bird-watching is also bird-listening. Psychotherapists listen for: what is not said; what seemingly cannot be said because it has not become sayable by the patient; for patterns of absence or denial; for over-repeated certainties; for unexamined assumptions. Group therapists sometimes refer to ‘what they are hearing’ as they listen attentively and generally mean by that that they are about to attempt to articulate (a systemic perhaps unconscious feature of the group’s life and process) precisely has *not* been spoken. Is there an elephant in the room? Quakers in their worship ‘listen’ meta-literally, that is to say they literally keep silent and listen, but simultaneously enact a symbolic, metaphoric act of waiting for what arises within or without in the group as a movement of inspiration. This activity cannot be practiced without the combination of the literal and the symbolic, presence and absence inflecting each other in the embodied practice.

13.15. So the *habitus*, the logic of practice, of the concert–hall audience listening to live classical music, is determined significantly by cultural features of pedagogy, secular and religious ritual and the dispositions that are taken fore-granted as a result of our participation in them. These influences place an emphasis on paying attention, whereas the ability of a listening *hexis* and *techne* opens up new possibilities in listening. We can see from other cultural practices that deep listening, practices of waiting and silence can become a *hexis* and also provide possibilities for a practice repertoire of listening.

13.16. Bourdieu’s theory of the listening *habitus* therefore needs further explanation. If dispositions are engendered in the ways he describes, how can we give an account of changes that might take place in the *habitus*? Is any *habitus* naturally conservative? The answer to this might be found in the kind of intervention that this ‘action-learning’ listening project proposes. It may be possible to generate new practices and disciplines of listening and it may be possible to generate a new aesthetic discourse by sharing the sense-making that takes place in the audience. These explicit expressions may assist in developing a changing repertoire of listening practices and shared meanings.

13.17. It may seem a trivial observation but a listening setting is constituted by people remaining and keeping silent as I explored in the previous section. We cannot therefore think about listening without also thinking about silence, and silence is a key component in what I call ritual listening. Silence is often rhetorically given an ontology and referred to a ‘the silence’. This keeping silent or keeping ‘the silence’ as a group constitutes the conditions of possibility that then constitutes those present. This keeping silent is itself a human construction, an art-work that has features of a human installation or sculpture. Posture, breathing, stillness, slowness and silence are its basic components. Silence is not literal : it is a social construction.

13.18. A repertoire of listening practices is apparent even within ritual listening. Some attempt to empty their minds of thought and pre-occupations, others use a focal symbol, image or motif around which to gather their perceptions, and these practices are analogous to the distinction that is made between meditation which may have cognitive content, and contemplation which attempts to be ‘wordless’. These practices take place in the presence of others – in co-presence.

13.19. Co-presence defines a collective mutual endeavor and is an analytic concept subsuming within it the notion of co-sentience.

Co-presence is anchored in the perceptual and communicative modalitites of the body…the full conditions of co-presence are found whenever agents sense that they are close enough to be perceived in what they are doing, including their experiencing of others, and close enough to perceive in this sensing of being perceived…(this) presumes the mutual reflexive monitoring of conduct….in some part introduces an enclosure of those involved (Giddens 1984:36,64,67,68).

Co-presence also entails the enspacement of the listening subject. Listeners are located in space. This situatedness is both true of all others and different from all others. They cannot see *where* they are only *from where* they are (Merleau-Ponty 1962:172ff). This creates a heightened sense of the tension between unity and difference, what is common and what is unique. The ideas of both Nancy and Scruton in respect of the way listening is a construction of the subject self and also the acceptance and recognition of others in this respect is here amplified by conceiving of the audience as ritualising actors creating the conditions under which listening can be a creative and imaginative act in a constructed audioscape. These conditions are also in the structures and patterns of the music as ritual listeners are immersed (we can close our eyes but not our ears) in a sonic world, an audioscape. We will examine a detailed extension and particularity of this general theory in Spitzers specific explanation of how musical character, harmony, melody, rhythm give rise to metaphors. The general point here is that it is useful to consider the descriptions of Scruton, Kivy and Nancy, about movement, contours, patterns, schema, and resonance as taking place in the hospitable place of the audience’s listening ritual. This is a key plank in the argument for the full realisation of the live music performance requiring a listening audience. The ritual heterotopic enclosed sensorium is where the music is dramatized in the imaginations of listeners. It is where listeners compose themselves to be ‘transported’; to be ‘out of time’ by inhabiting novel time signatures; to find themselves taken in by certain features; and to exercise a repertoire of different listening strategies in a world made strange.

13.20. In the work of Nancy, Marsh, Scruton and Kivy we find music described as having shape, contours, related to bodily rhythms, and sense-making as emerging from that relationship. In silent worship for example, the silence reflects the bodily states and practices of worshippers. All these features operating within the co-presence and co-sentience of the *habitus* are what the audience as social system becomes: a ritual heterotopic enclosed sensorium in which I suggest audiences practice *Auditory Play*.

13.21.. This in turn has an anthropological expression in the work of Bell (1992,1997) in describing the ritual sensorium. In my previous research on the place of the body in Quaker ‘silent’ worship it was clear that it is important in understanding the silent listening practice neither to be reductive to the physical nor to detach the metaphors from the bodily functions that give rise to them. The senses are both metaphorised and remain as literal activities. ‘Breathing’, ‘listening’, ‘waiting’*,* and *‘*stillness’ are examples. These activities in turn require a ritual sensorium in which these elaborations can find meaning. The medium in which they do so is silence. Silence itself is also both literal and metaphoric. These classification systems, the combination of the literal and the figurative meanings, become what Bell calls ‘schemes’ (Bell, 1992:115). They inform the combining of bodily practices as the components of what I call, using a musical metaphor, ‘harmonic integration’ and organise ritual practice and understanding. It is in this sense also that audiences ‘compose’ themselves. In Bell’s terms repeated performance of presence, bodily disciplines, basic sociality of group constitution are the initial basis for ritualised action. We can see the development of an initial scheme from material presented so far: body (being there) – sentience (co-sentience) –presence (co-presence) – posture (looking at others) – breathing (listening) – stillness (silence) – emptying – centering-down – attention – waiting – ritual extension into and representation of the social world.

13.22. These are the components of a model and the practice of ‘harmonic integration’. They are an embodied *habitus*, (Bourdieu, 1990:66-79) a preconceptual structuring of experience. These classifications are social in origin, a property of the group and acquired by mimesis (Lloyd-Richards, 2010). Audiences that recursively attend events, in subscription systems or by local loyalty may also show features of group-life. That is they might show movement from formation, shared conventional dispositions, habitus to potentially more active articulated responses and even executive crowd-sourcing commissioning. Exploring these possibilities is part of this research proposal.

13.23. Schematism as used in ritual theory (Bell, 1992) is reflected also in the work of Michael Spitzer who links *schema,* borrowing from Kant, with his theory of how ‘metaphorical mapping’ between domains takes place in accounts of listening to music (Spitzer, 2004:60-76), and is also supported by the ‘preference for prototypes’ model (Martindale and Moore, 1988). In the latter model aesthetic preference is hypothetically a positive function of the degree to which music stimulates pre-coded mental representations. The model is based on the idea that we prefer patterns that are easily recognisable and classifiable (North and Hargreaves, 2008).

13.24. It is in this sense that the co-presence of listeners, as an audience, and what they construct can be usefully thought of as performative ritualization. These ritual acts prepare the bodies of individuals and the corporate gathering to constitute the matrix in which the contours and patterns of music are dramatized and resonate. This space is also heterotopic (Pilgrim, 2008:53) set off from other everyday spaces, so that encounter with creativity, the radically other, novel and surprising can be both ‘anticipated’ and contained. The concepts of ‘ritual’ and ‘ritualization’ are clearly useful in exploring practices of listening. They function in the way described by Goehr:

When we treat a concept as open we treat it as unbounded; its definition need be confined only to know or uncontroversial, canonical, or paradigm examples, such as the word ‘game’. Open concepts are treated so they can undergo alteration in their definition without losing their identity as new examples come to appear as standard, as the practice within which they function changes…they are ‘signposts’ facilitating language use (Goehr 2007:93ff).

Ritual entails recursive, habitual, repeated mimesis, tradition, reference to memory, ritualising actors, and ritual mastery in a well informed cognoscenti. We do not need to join Kivy in a hierarchical or elitist notion of ritual mastery in understanding music, but we can seek to explore the differences that arise between listeners. Ritual mastery is achieved not by asking what sounds as music means as symbol but by taking part in the bodily practices, and there to find the symbolic meaning embodied as indistinguishable from the literal – this is the state that Nancy speaks of. Listeners have agency, are spectators and also actors in this reception theory. Listeners have agency as ‘knowledgeable actors’, (Giddens 1984:21,25,26,258). As we have seen from the Quaker silence example this agency can entail emptying the mind in the sense of ‘negative capability’ (Keats 1817) and as ‘intentional non-intentionality’ (Humphrey and Laidlaw 1994:94).

13.25. It is clear therefore that as the individual is suffused with musical sound, resonating, that this is also the case in the ritual space. Because the spatio-temporal aspects of inside/outside, then/now/then, are suspended in music, or rather ordered newly by the composer, and both bodies and spaces are suffused with musical sound then sense-making must emerge from the very ambiguity of the word sense, as both sensation and potential interpretation. For this to happen Spitzer proposes that we need to be able to understand any articulation of this as metaphor and Scruton too talks of the unpacking of a metaphor as a way of thinking about musical understanding. For the bridge to be crossed between a bodily experience and a cognitive understanding we are relieved, bodily, of distinctions (eg.inside/outside) and also relieved cognitively of the distinction between the literal and the metaphorical. Silence for listeners to music is as Quaker silence meta-literal, (Coleman, 2003) that is, it remains the literally kept silence whilst also becoming a process symbol for the presence of the spirit/sound as music. These dimensions of silence are elided and fused and necessary for each other.

13.26. To think of the audience as constructing, by ritualised performance, an audioscape for listening practices seems to be helpful in operationalizing the descriptions that our various commentators give of how musical listening is linked to sense-making. It remains still an open question whether, if we give the audience a voice, a ‘sound language’ of *music poetics* will emerge, that will point in two directions, to personal meanings and to a potentially shared aesthetic discourse.

13.27. I now set out a working taxonomy of listening practices which describes listening strategies and which I theories provides, in their interaction, the basis for Auditory Imaginative Play.

***A Taxonomy of Listening: A Repertoire for Auditory Play.***

***Structure and Pattern Listening*:** Here the listener focuses on the formal intrinsic elements of music: counterpoint, structure, movements, music theory in practice. There is an appreciation of structures, pattern and order related to compositional intention. This highly informed listening also appreciates the ‘rules and conventions of the game’ and takes delight in departure from them in terms of added complexity, asymmetries and novelty. Here the trained ‘ear’ is able to engage in contrapuntal and polyphonic listening. These are ‘syntactic’ listening strategies (Smith, 1987) and linked to ‘patterned formalism’ (Kivy,1990).

***Programmed listening:*** Here the listener is highly informed, literally by Program Notes, but also by background knowledge. Focus moves from the assessment of the way the performance realises the assumed composer’s intentions to the interpretive skills of conductor and players who realise it (Kramer, 2011). Focus is bounded by the sense of the integrity of the whole ‘work’ (Goehr, 1992) which stands as an independent art-work (Zangwill, 2007). This approach and the previous one exemplify ‘objective analytic’ listening strategies (Hargreaves & Coleman, 1981).

***Listening through*** ***Identification:*** Here there is a focus on visuality and performance, especially identification and particularly the conductor’s movement and gesture, the ‘subject position’, interpretive perspective, that the conductor invites the listeners to take. This listening strategy also includes focus on particular performers or instruments. This strategy places weight on participation and the ‘eventness’ of the performance.

***Sentient Listening***: The listener here allows him/herself to be immersed in the musical sound, letting the sound and music ‘wash over‘ them. The listeners allow themselves to be stimulated, ‘played with’; permissive and submissive, but not passive; there is pleasure in ‘raw feels’. An awareness and interest in embodied mood may arise. This is ‘arousal’ though listening (Berlyne, 1971). Related practices here are those which treat music as sounds and treat musical performance as a ‘soundscape’ by analogy to ambient sounds in the natural world.

***Reflexive and Referential Listening*** : Here the listening strategy is to knowingly to enable sentient listening, by certain practices, for example ‘intentional unintentionality’ (Humphrey & Laidlaw, 1994), breathing, posture, ‘centering down’; and also to enable emergent substantive reference – a reflexive sense of ones ‘self’ as a resonant listener (Nancy, 2007), and reference to what arises in ‘free association’. This approach goes ‘where the music takes you’ in both idle and knowing modes. The listener comes to notice the reverie, daydream, shapes, colours, contours, the visualised landscape, the sense of a narrative, being ‘transported’, being elsewhere, being on a journey, being ‘lost’ and ‘found’, that emerges in their listening. This exemplifies ‘affective listening’ (Hargreaves and Coleman, 1981) and ‘emotional and referential listening’ (Smith, 1987). Particular examples of referential listening take place in therapeutic milieu, in ‘deep listening’ as part of a holistic therapeutic practice (Oliveros, 2005), in relation to aesthetic preconceptions of beauty, the sublime and also in sacred ritual settings where a ‘theopoetic’ and transcendent aspect of music is assumed (Begbie,2013).

***Listening as Hearing.*** Here the listener approaches a known piece of music with a high degree of foreknowledge which is folded into and provides a framework for the particular performance, critically or uncritically, for simple recursive pleasure or for critical comparison.

***Ritual Participatory Listening:*** This listening strategy depends on mutuality:listening with other auditors as a social system and within a listening habitus. The habitus may represent a ‘taste public’ (Bourdieu, 1990). Auditors are aware of a ‘being-there-eventness’, and are ritualising and performative actors, ‘composing’ themselves; keeping silent, still and holding the performance space. The listeners are aware of their key role in the fulfilment of the whole musical performance and event, and constitute the event.

These modes of *Auditory Play* can be shown as follows:

**Auditory Play Modes**.

PROGRAMMED

The ‘Work’, History

Compositional Intent

Recorded Comparison

STRUCTURAL

Comprehensive, analytic,

Patterned formalism.

LISTENING AS HEARING

Foreclosure of sense and meaning. The known shape.

NARRATIVE TIME

Following, unfolding.

The road, its unwinding

and it destination.

INDENTIFICATION

Subject Position

Visuality

Playing Along

REFERENTIAL

Extrinsic, linked

Purpose or function

Therapy, Sacred,

Heritage

REFLEXIVE

Sonorous-----Presence

Resonating-Self-Becoming

Sound----Sense

APPROPRIATION

Memory

“Our Song”

LOCAL------GLOBAL

FOCUS

Elemental- Soundscape

DEEP----------HYPER

Depth Breadth

Points Network

HABITUS

Co-presence, Participation.

Ritual,

Eventness.

SENTIENCE

‘Wash Over’,

Arousal/ Expectation

13.28. These 12 listening practices, strategies, modes of Auditory Play are not exhaustive, neither are they mutually exclusive. They are modes of engagement with music derived from the review of the literature on listening. They preceded but overlap and intermingle with the second level of this enquiry which is the level of articulated responses to music which concern, how meaning, understanding and interpretation constellate within and after listening, leading to a formal focus on hermeneutics and aesthetics.

These listening modes, as they elide and inflect each other, create the possibility of Auditory Play [[23]](#footnote-23). This play is therefore constructed and performed in an embodied way by the listener in moving between, and combining, these modes. I have set out a theory of imagination underlying this framework drawn from the work of Harris, 2000), this includes the ability to imagine a situation that does not exist in the present, to imagine it as a possibility, to be ‘elsewhere’ in time and space, (Jonson, 2015), to imagine others and notice empathy (Walton,2015).

13.29. This listening play is itself a practice, a listening act. It allows certain getsalts to emerge by combinations of harmonic integration of knowing and wandering, but focal, attention to patterns and specific elements such as harmony, rhythm/tempo/pulse/timbre, mood and melody that are allowed to move in and out of focus and combine, and by reflective and reflexive listening that allows a range of schema and metaphors to arise in relation to these musical elements. The modes can be thought of as having relative: ‘closedness’ or ‘openness’; being ‘active’ or ‘passive’; having a balance of relations to intra and extra musical aspects; and being convergent or divergent in relation to a shared aesthetic discourse.

13.30. *Auditory Play* therefore represents a repertoire of practices, by and through which listeners compose themselves in relation to all the elements of the live musical event.

I now turn to the connection between listening practices and sense-making and articulation of the listening experience, which in tern gives rise to meaning and interpretation.

**14. The Metaphor Shower: Aesthetic Discourse and Music Poetics.**

14.1. When classical music listening is written about in an accessible way it can have a significant impact on both listening and concert attendance. An example of this is Alex Ross’s two recent books, *The Rest is Noise*, and *Now Listen To This*. The first of these was so influential that it stimulated a concert series by that name on the South Bank in London. The books were successful because they took a historical, narrative approach to the lives and output of composers over the C20th*. The Rest is Noise* is undoubtedly a major achievement but it is noteworthy that in a book on music of 800 pages the words ‘audience’ and ‘listening’ do not appear in the index. This is somewhat unfair because the book includes many examples of audience reactions to pieces of music, nevertheless the observation stands: practices of listening, the nature of audiences and their expressed sense-making and interpretations are not common. There is an extensive literature theorising the experience of music and on the history of aurality[[24]](#footnote-24).

14.2. What seems clear is that there is an anthropology, ethnomusicology literature on listening as a knowledge practice, (Becker, J. 2010 et al.) but little on the nature of audiences as groups, nor are ethnographic accounts of experiences of listening to music common. I have also shown in this paper that there are two gaps or epoches, one cultural and the other in our research methods. The first concerns the mute voice of the audience as it might appear in a shared aesthetic discourse, the second is the interdisciplinary space between philosophy of music, music theory, social psychology and anthropology. This paper proposes a form of enquiry in those overlapping spaces. I propose that as we establish ways of articulating listening as a practice we can move into an area of articulation and expression, and the substance of sense-making.

14.3. This section therefore sketches the background for the development of a set of emergent cultural practices – active/creative listening and a shared aesthetic discourse – that are made possible by a shift in the field of musicology. This shift has been noted by Beard & Gloag (2005) and by Kramer (2011) and ‘reflects a wider move to displace positivism and the concept of the autonomous work’. Lydia Goehr (2007) has been a significant contributor to this. This shift has two important consequences in ‘altering the framework of musicological discussion’ (Beard & Gloag, 2005). First the development of a ‘critcal musicology’ exemplified by Kramer (2011) and second, cultural practices that emerge out of new engagements of other disciplines, and the listening audience, with music performance.

14.4. Kramer argues that meaning in and of music is now subject to ‘open interpretation’ away from the autonomy of the work, structural detached observation, hard evidence and literal description and towards process, performative engagement but correctly eschews another dualism between competing ‘realisms’. He champions the role of hermeneutic and favours the evocative over the systematic in rebalancing musicological discourse. Such interpretive evocations of musical meaning are also generative, that is to say they add new narratives to the realisation of the music:

Meaning does not inhere, it emerges, its acts. Meaning is an event, the occurrence of something singular. The event is something that “occurs to’ a subject in both senses of the term, “befalls’ and “comes to mind”. Its primary media are verbal, including paraphrase, ekphrasis, troping and metaphor…(Kramer, 2011)

Meanings in music are inextricably bound up for Kramer with the creative act of interpretation. Interpretation has to remain ‘open’, it does not work on the decoding and understanding of a fixed esoteric order or the assumption that there is a wholly organised set of meanings to which reductive explanations are the key to meaning. This applies also not only to listening to music but also to researching music’s effects, and I have noted here the limits of reductive social psychological explanations and their category error in assuming that the raw arousal material that seems involuntary constitutes interpretation or meaning for the listener.

14.5. Kramer’s perspective is clearly essential for the proposals in this paper, in particular the thesis that there is a muted aesthetic discourse that will emerge when listeners share their experiences and interpretations. This thesis is amplified by the work of Spitzer who sets out a prototypical theory of musical understanding, expressions of which will appear through cross-domainal ‘metaphorical mapping’ as patterns of metaphor. Both Kramer and Spitzer would argue that metaphor has a symbolic realist cognitive status (Bhaskar, 2015) in interpretive acts. I therefore quote Kramer’s position at some length.

Informal interpretations of music, phrases just blurted out – unsystematic, freely metaphorical, not especially articulate – are important far in excess of their lack of substance. They have both social and cognitive value even if they do not rise to the level of an imaginary colloquy on Mendelssohn’s Violin Concerto. They activate shared assumptions about subjectivity; they foster feeling of alliance and identification; they participate in the hermeneutics of everyday life that maintains our intuitive, precritical sense of the world. Sharing them is a form of world making. And it is also a form of music making, an echo of the music of that sphere. These ascriptions, these semantic improvisations, are not habitual, they are inevitable, it is hard to image music without them. (Kramer, 2011:66)

This is the basis of what I call, after Spitzer, *Music Poetics* which, in research terms can be supported ethnographically. Such articulations of sense-making of music as music can be encouraged through the development of *Active Listening*, and consistent with my perspective on the audience as a performative social system, these cultural activities and art-works are created, shared, and dramatized in social groups.

14.6. The realisation of a piece of performed music is always incomplete and resonant. It persists but is never finalised. The process from composers’ imagined sonic worlds to listeners’ through performance and conducting is therefore non-linear. The interstices for interpretation in the hermeneutic circle: between composer and symbolic score; between the score and the performers; the score and the conductor; the conductor and the performers; between the conductor and the audience through the ‘subject position’ proffered by the conductor as animateur of the event; are further enriched by the responses of the listeners as audience, and resonate further in sense-making, and potential cultural discourse. Kramer asserts that ‘the criterion for viability or credibility in interpretation is response in kind’ (Kramer, 2001:68). This has significant impact on claims to validity and authority made at any single point in the realisation of live music as understood within a hermeneutic circle and beyond. Meaning in Kramer’s terms expands and enriches as it departs from its points of origin. The research challenge is to chart the way in which this excess converges as a shared aesthetic as it persists and diverges as personal meanings. The eventness of music’s realisation and the social co-presence of listeners is a critical way in which these multiple subjectivities, diversity, can also constitute a social resonant matrix of unity. This unifying fabric is constitutes both by the creation of the conditions for the possibility of subjects listening in their own way: using their repertoire; affirming their subjectivity and also by the possibility of the emergence of substantive patterns of shared aesthetic sense-making.

14.7. If a critical musicology, exemplified by Kramer, does create a theoretical basis for the research proposed in this paper, can we sketch out, in parallel to the way Nancy’s phenomenology suggests how rich descriptions of listening might arise, those influences that might shape these expressions of hearing – a *music poetics*? To do this I draw on the work of Michael Spitzer and his work *Metaphor and Musical Thought* (2004), *Metaphor* by Dennis Donoghue (2014) and *The Work of the Imagination* by Paul Harris (2000).

14.8. These writers start from the assumption that metaphor does not proceed from the literal but coexists with referential naming of objects. This non-object focus has been described as ‘things’ rather than objects by Kramer (2011), as in the phrase ’things being what they are’ that is a state of affairs. Metaphor for Spitzer, Harris, Donoghue is not a later flourish or embellishment upon a more descriptive, literal and referential way of naming. They draw on the work of Lakoff & Johnson (1980) and also on the Kantian concept of ‘schema’. Metaphor is considered to work both figuratively an also cognitively. It is considered to tell us something about the world, and also to offer gains to actuality by shaping the world. The constant play of seeing, hearing and expressing ‘one thing’ as ‘something else’, seeing ‘as’ and hearing ‘as’ are regarded as critical, even in evolution, for our ability to construe our environment and have agency within it. Harris (2000) shows from studied of children that imaginative play is directly related to the development of a conceptual and action/decision-making repertoire. Further that autonomic responses (affect/emotion) are central to these processes. The ability to imagine a situation in which one is, ‘now not/was not/is not yet’, presents the challenge of coping with spatio-temporality, and these demands are met by imagination and by the ability to imagine possibilities from many perspectives. That is achieved by metaphor’s ability to enable us to see one thing in terms of another. So that emotion in a possible narrative becomes a reality, and a key function in cognising the meaning of the narrative.

14.9. The tradition of arousal theories of music in social psychology would be consistent with this view. The way in which our ability to deploy this capability of construing the ‘not now /was not/is not yet’ demands of spatio-temporality can be shown to operate in listening to music has been extensively studied by Huron (2007). The exercise of this critical capacity is ‘practiced for real’ in play as I have defined it in *Auditory Play*. An example of this play is in the nexus of elements that cluster around ‘anticipation’ in listening to music, what we expect, when we expect it. Huron constructs a linear model of anticipation with five dimensions of: *expectation–tension–reaction response–prediction response-appraisal,* and provide detailed examples of movements between these registers. Listening is therefore highly nuanced in the repertoire it uses for playing. The metaphors which emerge reflect the interplay of the way Kramer argues music expresses its meaning, by affect, by its sensory qualities and by its insistent unfolding.

14.10. It may be argued that music has no need of the semantic, that it is sublime, transcendent and ineffable, it is background, a simple sensory pleasure that has no need to go reaching after meanings. Kramer addresses the ‘illusion’ or artifice of a sensory immediacy by noting that all attempts to situate listening in such a register is to be lulled by this very illusion, paradoxically of which we are knowing. To allow oneself to be so lulled is the first dimension of play, Kramer argues that this in itself is a semantic description of musical meaning and that following the work of Cook (2001) notes that the balance between sensory, potential meaning and verbal expression is tilted towards the semantic. Kramer argues:

Cook rightly associates the experience of potential meaning in music with the effects of ineffability and immediacy. These effects have enormous power; a listener swayed by them might well feel that the limits of both language and thought have been left behind. But potential meaning as such is not a musical phenomenon. It more properly belongs to discourse, or more properly to temporalization, the streaming of performative utterances and /or their equivalents in other media. This streaming which has breaks, backcurrents and eddies as well as onward flow, is what generates potential meaning. (Kramer, 2004:74).

Here Kramer illustrates that it is metaphor all the way down. It seems impossible to talk about talking about music in any other way but metaphor. It is also the case that our sense of the boundary of the ineffable has itself, as it were, a moving history. What cannot be talked about (or not said) is part of our history of aurality. Our limits on expression, the edge of words, moves when we hear someone else addressing that space, even when they might do so in a language of ‘unsaying’ noting the inadequacy of any description to be a terminus of sense-making.

14.11. So if we accept the hermeneutic perspective of Kramer can we find indications of what a shared aesthetic discourse amongst listeners might consist of? Spitzer offers a promising way forward. Spitzer concurs with Kramer that the meaning of music inheres not in the notes themselves but in the concepts we apply to them. He thinks that we carry a set of prototypes in mind and these are cognitive semantics, image schemata, and we draw from these categories as our bodies interact with the world. ‘Metaphorical mapping’ is the way we get from bodily experience to the structure of thought and language. This idea has a long history and appears in Vico’s ideas of the source of all metaphor being the body, and his extrapolation into the idea of ‘poetic logic’. Thus in listening to music we conceptually project onto the music’s contours the shape and movement of our bodies, a well as embodying actual movement responses. In doing so we articulate our experience of music by metaphorically projecting attributes of an extra musical domain onto music. The cognitive and interpretive power of these metaphors is illustrated by Spitzer, through the contrasting directions in which the common metaphors of life as a ‘tree’ and life as a ‘journey’ take us.

14.12. Spitzer builds on this base a set of relations between the musical elements of harmony, rhythm and melody suggesting that there is a natural fit, and isomorphism between: *harmony and visuality*; as painting, as image, and as living tableau; *between rhythm and language*, vocal utterance; and between *melody and organism –* life and person. Representation, language and embodiment comprise three distinct domains of human experience. In the history of aurality Spitzer suggests that these organising metaphors are associated with three historical epochs: baroque when metaphors of proportion and vision dominate; the rhythmic gesture and poetic expression of classical thought; and the organic and dynamic process metaphors used by the romantics. Spitzer accepts Scruton’s assertion that music has at it centre the ‘indispensible metaphor ‘ of the illusion that music can be alive, have an ontology as it embodies human qualities, but he rejects the limitations of listening only in one metaphorical register. He claims that listeners can chose to listen with differential focal attention on these three indispensible, different elements of music and their attendant metaphorical associations. Spitzer holds therefore a cognitive theory of metaphor and a Kantian concept of schema[[25]](#footnote-25) as prototypes. He believes that the way we conceptualise music is not in principle different from the way we conceptualise the world, and that therefore there is a pedagogical pathway within our listening histories, that is we can learn to hear as well as to listen.

14.13. So there are musical schemata which are the basis for metaphors. They have been described as: container; path; force; near/far; and balance and coupled with the sense of flow, moving across, letting flow, and navigation. Spitzer presses these schema and their metaphorical possibilities from basic gestalt perception, image formation, motor movement to epistemic levels of cognitive processing, learning, recognition, memory and critically for my purpose here in ‘linguistic expression’.

If Spitzer is sound then we can also expect the linguistic expressions that are produced through listening to music to be constructed around the concerns that structure our life-world, since we use the same processes of schemata and metaphor in cross domainal mapping of the world as we do in making sense of music. Hearing ‘as’ entails the musical world we listen to being re-realised in our imaginative constructions of that world with the same processes that we use to construct our own life-world. This is not intelligible using concepts of subject/object, inside/outside, reading on/reading off, projection/(re-)appropriation. The expressive listener who expresses what they understand they are hearing is not clearly demarcating discovery from creativity. This is what Scruton is alluding to when he describes listening to music as akin to ‘face recognition’. It is as if, to deploy a visual metaphor, the listener looks into the eyes of the composer. Spitzer however gives firm priority in aesthetics to the craft of composition and to musical ontology, his is no facile reception theory. There is an autonomous musical reality to be interpreted.

14.14. Sptizer addresses the question of whether cognitive metaphors, which are models for construing the world, have common features with metaphors which are tropes, poetic metaphors, as scientific and artistic kinds of imaginaries. He argues that the schemata are the connecting base for these two kinds of metaphor and they appear in music interpretation as follows:

***Fig. 3.***

Analytical metaphor …………………Cultural metaphor

*Metonony Metaphor*

Intramusical / Cross-domain

Experiental image schema

Spitzer then adds to this model the posited relationships between musical elements and their attendant metaphors and the underlying experiential image schema, giving the following model:

***Fig. 4.***

Harmony/painting rhythm/language melody/life organism

Centre/periphery part/whole path

The whole model therefore has the following structure:

***Fig.5.***

Analytical metaphor ……………………………………Cultural metaphor

*Metonony Metaphor*

Intramusical / Cross-domain

Harmony––rhythm––melody painting–– language–– life organism

path

part/whole

Centre/periphery

14.15. What Spitzer’s work offers is a framework, that is theoretically based for imagining the kind of *music poetics* that might emerge when individual listeners express their sense-making of music and also how a shared the aesthetic discourse may also show these patterns. It offers a map which suggests that it may be possible to navigate in the metaphor showers that are likely to be found in ethnographic accounts derived from a phenomenological exploration into listening to music.

14.16. What is missing from Spitzer’s model are the elements of live eventness, and the mutuality of the co-present listening audience as a social system. The model atomises listeners and does not offer a way of imagining the emergent properties of the interplay and cumulation of the key elements he identifies. Listeners in their sense-making seek a coherent overall shape to their experience however pleasant or unpleasant. The metaphor of music as a ‘river’ might help us to understand the way in which the repertoire of aural play is deployed by listeners, to put ones hand in the flow, to go against the flow, to stay with a particular ‘gaze’, stone or obstacle, and so on. But what is not necessarily figural is the ‘water’, the way in which the parts *and* the whole are created and sustained. A conceptual staging post towards this awareness is the collective aspects of eventness, the unstoppable momentum of flow, and mutual co-presence, back of this is the ground, the conditions for the possibility of all of it. This does not readily appear in Spitzer’s model. In the intramusical domain it may appear as timbre, mood, and atmosphere, in the cross-domainal area it appears as mutuality, communitas and fellowship. The underlying schema for the ground, which is the totality could be conceived as ‘world’ or in Hayden’s (2002) terminology ‘mondo’. The experiential listening correlate of this schema and the metaphors for understanding that are produced by it will be senses of the transcendent, where the music is not limited to being an imaginary sonic world shared between the composer, performers and listeners, but seems to constitute a disclosure of the sustaining forces of creation itself. If this aspect was added to Spitzer’s model it becomes:

***Fig.6.***

**Analytical metaphor ………………………Cultural metaphor**

*Metonony Metaphor*

Intramusical / Cross-domain

Harmony––rhythm––melody painting–– language–– life organism

Timbre, mood atmosphere, communitas

………….. path…………..

………………part/whole……………….

…………………Centre/periphery ……………………….

…………………………….. World/Mondo……………………………….

14.17. Spitzer’s work represents a promising framework for anthropological research in this area. It lacks a meta-level metaphor for music itself, rather than its elements, and also lacks a systemic, emergent dimension. These metaphors will create respectively an ontology and a transformative effect. Transformative effects are emergent, coming from the systemic aspects of the listening group in the event (mood, atmosphere) and in the re-creative realisation of the art-work in the interpretive practices of listeners – how ‘ludic audition’, playful listening repertoire constructs sense-making.

Examples of *emergent* and *transformational* metaphors using Spitzer’s initial ‘tree’ and ‘journey’ paradigms are as follows:

***Fig.6.***

Cloud

Rain

Seed Germination

Harvest

***Fig. 7.***

Metaphors of Listening

River––––––––––––––––––––––––––––––––––––––––––––––––––––––––––––––––––––Flow

Rock/Obstacle Bank Pool Eddies Floatation /Immersion Swept Away

Sea

14.18. Spitzer’s work, augmented by some of the concepts here, seems to provide a promising set of analytic concepts for thinking about sense-making in listening to live music. It also provides a thesis about the contents of descriptions, ethnographies, that we might find expressed by auditors. If theses ethnographies are indeed patterned by the metaphor and underlying schema as Spitzer suggests, then this will also inform a further analysis of the shared aesthetic discourse that we also wish to explore.

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**Draft, not for citation in this form.**

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**{Further Essay in Progress: *“Qui Tollis Peccata Mundi….” Re-enchantment: The Ordering of the Sacred as Aesthetic Naturalism or Theopoesis.***

This essay raises the question of the meaning of the displacement of sacred music to the concert hall and its return to concerts in churches. It examines the ‘meaningless’ incantation of liturgy and text in these contexts, and its transformation into ‘speech sound’. It suggests that this process can be understood as a reordering of the ‘sacred’ by the appropriation of scared music and its performance settings. This reordering is considered to come full circle in Theopoesis as images and symbols of divinity re-emerge in musical performance. A case study of the poetics of Psalmody and chant is included.}

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C13th Bas-Relief from St Michaels Monastery. Pyrenees. France showing the enlarged ears of the monks, symbolising their commitment to silent prayer and listening.

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**Appendix 1.**

North and Hargreaves Reciprocal Feedback Model of Musical Response (North & Hargreaves 2008:124).

1. The Curriculum noted above might also be informed by various Edexcel publications noted in the bibliography below which include Listening Tests, Practice Listening Papers and sample tracks of musical material from wide ranging sources and cultures. [↑](#footnote-ref-1)
2. One key feature of anthropological research needs to be noted. In framing the questions for research and in the methodology adopted, cultural practices are approached by the engagement of the researcher in these social cultural practices, by describing and mapping those practices, and examining them as to their meaning and significance. This is not a process for producing a causal reductive explanation of experience or mental or emotional states. Neuroscience and some evolutionary theory are therefore outside its concerns. Social Psychology and theories of ‘arousal’ lie on the cusp between these approaches and I therefore include them, but the usefulness of the concept of ‘arousal’ as producing meaning through acts of cognitive interpretation is open to question – in short it is possible to show that listeners have high heart rates and other responses when listening to certain musical sounds but this data does not tell us what these states, and therefore the music, means to the listener. [↑](#footnote-ref-2)
3. I am using the term ‘classical music’ in the sense used by Kramer in his book, *Why Classical Music Still Matters* (2007) not as a name of a period in the history of music. Kramer defines this as music which requires the ‘patience to listen’, as well as having characteristics of scores, forces, structures, audiences, concert-going, and art-music. [↑](#footnote-ref-3)
4. I note that the kind of representations which various types of models offer is a complex issue. Isomorphic models (scaled down representations), eg. of buildings, differ from ‘models for’ eg. blueprints, and also from ‘models of’ which chart phenomena such as climate change and economic systems. In the latter variables are arrayed but are open to manipulation, and this is part of their purpose (Geertz, 1965). Heuristic models and ‘maps’ such as the one used here are close to these ‘models of’. The model offered here differs in use from the ‘*Reciprocal Feedback Model* ‘of North and Hargreaves (2008) set out in the Appendix here which attempts to represent specific measurable musical variables. That is a ‘realist’ model whereas my anthropological model/map is a conceptual symbolic heuristic model. It is intended to show relations between elements for the purposes of phenomenological ethnographic focus. In certain cases these elements overlap in real time. Non-linear models such as this attempt to show the mix of variables which creates overdetermined causation, that is to say they do not offer a linear explanatory route from a single cause. [↑](#footnote-ref-4)
5. The problems of composer/author intention in relation to score/text is fully explored in Iseminger, G. 1992. *Intention and Interpretation.* Temple University Press. Some commentators assert that there is no viable concept the author’s intention extrinsic to the art-work as it stands such that no interpretation in that space, (between the score and the composer) is legitimate, and Stravinsky took such a view. [↑](#footnote-ref-5)
6. Accounts of listening, and responding to music are relatively rare in literature, and an exploration could usefully be made here of this connection – Emma Sutton of the University of St Andrews English Department and her recent work on Virginia Woolfe may be a useful contact. There is, of course, a wide literature devoted to well-informed listening eg: *Art Matters* by Peter de Bolla on listening to Glen Gould paying Bach, and countless other texts. [↑](#footnote-ref-6)
7. I note that I am not suggesting the development of a ‘vocabulary’ that enables words and terms to accrue a set of shared meanings and value such that they become a closed discourse that encodes certain meanings on musical elements. Neither do I imagine that engaging with such audience accounts would be analogous to some kind of ‘dream interpretation’ of symbolic imagery or that musical meaning is analogous to seeing patterns in clouds. Exactly what will emerge is yet to be discovered and I propose that a domain of ‘poetics’, analogous to the uses of words in poetry, is the most useful one to support this exploration. Content analysis may show thematic patterns of metaphor use as Spitzer (2004) suggests and the thrust of research will be to show how these link to the inherent elements of the music rather that to map or chart them as some free-standing taxonomy of audience interpretive frameworks. ‘Decoding’ and ‘free-association’ will represent two polarities of the space for meaning that I am exploring. [↑](#footnote-ref-7)
8. Szendy notes that the term originates with Wagner for whom it describes ‘non-motivated’ or ‘groundless’ music, that music that has been extracted from its foundation in for example, dance. Hanslick developed the positive value of the term and Dahlhaus noted that ‘Historically it is not the ‘extramusical’ that is added to absolute music, but absolute music constitutes a form of abstraction or reduction’ Szendy, 2008:132). [↑](#footnote-ref-8)
9. For the specific contributions to this study see the sections on the disciplines of anthropology and ethnomusicology below, in particular the concepts of *habitus, hexix, techne*, and *field* developed by Bourdieu (1999) and applied to music listening by Becker, 2010; Coessens & Ostersjo, 2013; and Hargreaves & North, 2010. [↑](#footnote-ref-9)
10. We will have good reason to return to this observation when we consider the social and corporate nature of listening as ‘co-presence’, together with the distinctions to be made between embodying/ resonating with music, appropriating, attributing and projecting as part of the disciplines of listening. [↑](#footnote-ref-10)
11. Listening to any of Beethoven’s later String Quartets illustrates this paradox of authorial autonomy and will and the resultant sense of necessity, as definitive of the creative act and its relationship with its creator. The engagement with the world in an act of creativity, the holding together of a field of musical forces by a sheer act of will in this case, takes the listener far from notions of self-expression and interpretation by the composer towards an engagement with some reality that seems to have the force of necessity – paradoxically necessarily being brought into being. A ‘state of affairs’ is created, ‘things as they are’ are disclosed thereby. These things are not ‘objects’ but ‘things’ that gather history. I discuss the nature of these ‘things’ below in comments on Kramer’s hermeneutics. [↑](#footnote-ref-11)
12. Scruton notes that Hanslick’s problem concerning musical expression and emotion was created by his view that for music to do such a thing it would have to in some way represent the objects to which the emotions are attached so to speak. Scruton shows that this need not be the case. [↑](#footnote-ref-12)
13. This is fully developed in Begbie, 2013. Music, Modernity, and God. Essays in Listening. [↑](#footnote-ref-13)
14. Many societies do not have a word akin to the English term ‘music’. [↑](#footnote-ref-14)
15. This discussion is taken further in Section 8 in an examination of Kramer’s hermeneutics, (Kramer, 2011). [↑](#footnote-ref-15)
16. Steven Field’s *Sound and Sentiment* (1982) a study of Kaluli myth, song performance and emotional experience is regarded as a classic in ethnomusicological literature and such texts as *The Anthropology of Experience* by Victor Turner have opened up a greater concern with issues of embodiment and performativity. A recent review addressed a concern about the apparent decline in ethnographic outputs concerning music and concluded:It remains unclear, however, if the generalization about a former prominence and later decline in descriptive musical anthropology really holds. Franz Boas and his followers took a holistic view of culture and often discussed or at least mentioned music, as did Bronislaw Malinowski. George Herzog was an anthropologist so deeply concerned with music that he comfortably fits within comparative musicology. Nettl also cites Melville Herskovits, Robert Lowie on the Crow (1935), and Clark Wissler on the Blackfoot, among others, for including music in their ethnographies. He specifically highlights Margaret Mead's *Coming of Age in Samoa* (1928) as including a "short but insightful ethnography of music" (p. 63). The level of detail about music in this work, however, is easily matched and exceeded by anthropologists who published studies during the suggested period of decline—including Norman Whitten's work on *currulao* (an African-derived music-dance tradition from the Pacific coast of Colombia and Ecuador) in *Black Frontiersmen* (1974), Hans Buechler's study of Aymara panpipe performance in Bolivia as a window to social organization, William Mangin's work on migrant regional associations in Lima, Bruce Mannheim's work on Quechua songs, Jose María Arguedas's work on mestizo-indigenous relations in Peru, Ellen Basso's study of Kalapalo performance, Richard Price and Sally Price's work in Suriname, Fremont E. Besmer's study of the Hausa Bori cult, Colin Turnbull's discussion of Molimo music among the Mbuti, and Peter Fry's study of nationalism and spirit mediums in Zimbabwe, just to name a few examples. Morton H. Fried's general *Readings in Anthropology,* vol. 2, *Cultural Anthropology* (1968), includes two chapters on music and ethnomusicology—generous if one considers the number of facets of social life that needed to be covered. Conversely, founding father Edward Burnett Tylor's *Religion in Primitive Culture* ([1871] 1958), which considers a realm of life saturated with musical performance, barely mentions music at all. From the Boas camp, Ruth Benedict's *Patterns of Culture* (1934) does not mention music [↑](#footnote-ref-16)
17. Damasio makes this distinction in his use of the concept ‘emotion’ as giving rise to reflective ‘feeling’. Some find this a counter-intuitive ordering, but I will adopt these deffinitions. [↑](#footnote-ref-17)
18. Aristotle, Nicomachean Ethics. [↑](#footnote-ref-18)
19. It is instructive to observe audiences. There are a range of physical movements: nodding of heads, silent mouthing of words, a non-vocalisation of ‘tum-te-tum’; tapping of feet; drumming of fingers; slight swaying to some perceived pulse or rhythm; closing and opening eyes as well as certain postures. [↑](#footnote-ref-19)
20. These important distinctions I have noted in my discussion of Kramer’s concept of *Things* above in Section 8. [↑](#footnote-ref-20)
21. I am using context here as a dynamic social construction not as a static set of background circumstances. See *The Problems of Context* (Ref) [↑](#footnote-ref-21)
22. For an example see the work of Hevner (1937) in Gabrielsson & Linstrom 2010, *The Role of Structure in the Musical Expression of Emotions,* Oxford. Here a series of binary adjectives are found to emerge in relation to certain combinations of tempo, intensity and timbre. The methodology and findings are of interest but the key point here is that there is a category shift (towards causes and away from reasons) implicit in the application of these kind of findings to the process of the creation of personal meanings by listeners. Spitzer resists this simplistic determinative reduction. [↑](#footnote-ref-22)
23. 10. Space does not permit here a detailed discussion of the value of the ‘open concept’ *play* to listening but see: Garvey, C. (1990). *Play*. Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, Huizinga, J. (1955). *Homo Ludens; A Study of the Play-Element in Culture*. Boston, Beacon Press, Piaget, Jean (1962). *Play, dreams and imitation* (VOLUME 24). New York: Norton. Nachmanovitch, Stephen, *Free Play: Improvisation in Life and Art*. Tarcher/Penguin 1990, and particularly Harris (2000) op cit. [↑](#footnote-ref-23)
24. See, for example, Reimer, B. & Wright,E. 1992. *On the Nature of Musical Experience.* Evanson: University Press of Colorado, Erlmann, V.2014. *Reason and Resonance. A History of Modern Aurality*. Zone Books [↑](#footnote-ref-24)
25. Spitzer’s discussion on Kantian Schematism and it application can be followed in Spitzer, 2004:60 ff. [↑](#footnote-ref-25)