

Time, Music and Grammar. When Understanding and Performing What is Understood are Two Facets of the Same Action

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1. Aspects of the timelessness of music before the grammatical turn

I have already shown the role of music as a major paradigm to understand the philosophical matter of internal relations in the *Tractatus*, and even suggested a few conclusions as regards the status of “*Abbildung*” as a method, in the light of music.¹

Projecting: the *Abbildungscharakter* of music

It is through internal relations which are basic, unexplainable, not analytically justifiable, that signs in language “represent” the world, or if you prefer, modelize it. Representing is the counterpart of projection, or *Abbildung*.

The self-sufficiency of signs, semantically speaking, makes representation a full representation of what is projected, without loss. Such are « images », or projected sort of *Bilder*, which model facts through functional relations, notes in the case of music. Far from expressing a higher inexpressible idea, on the contrary they fully display structures of relations in a way which makes meaning depend upon them alone, without any further reference to a supposed ideal model. The guarantee for meaning is articulatedness of these primary relations, not a higher original entity similar to a Platonic model. This is very important not only to understand that the “model” here is closer to *Abbildung* or *Scheinbilder* for physicists (Hertz, Mach ...)²,

1 In earlier conferences, namely in Innsbruck 2004, then in Bergen 2005 in a series of workshops with Bergen University and Innsbruck Universities co-org. by A. Janik, A. Pichler, and myself. To be published in our forthcoming *Cahiers de philosophie du langage*, n° 8 (L'Harmattan, Paris).

2 About their mapping relation contained in *Abbildung*, I am here referring to David Hyder's reflections on the German sources of Wittgenstein, especially the Helmholtzian influence on Hertz's theory of science to which Wittgenstein explicitly refers in his picture-theory also applied to music; see *The Mechanics of*

than to an ideal norm of application of symbols the use of which should be measured.

“Music as a model for thinking sense”

Wittgenstein still goes further by asserting that what is articulated through signs (propositional signs) is only relevant to the possibility of projection, not to the projected entity itself. Projection which always is projection of a possible situation, is “thinking sense in a set of words” (McGuinness)³, e.g. projecting the form of the propositional sense, and not the content. What I find here interesting is that such precision occurs in a series of propositions in which music is supposed to illustrate this very principle of articulation (3.141) in terms of mirror-like structures, not by reference to objects.

Music would then similarly deal with structures of sense, given in mirror-like constellations of signs. It is when articulation is mentioned as a feature of what is reflected as in a mirror that the reader reads the first occurrence of the analogy with music about the determined character of the articulatedness of its signs. The similarity with music relies on the fact that signs are related in a determinate manner. “Articulation” is the “aspect” under which language looks like music, which does not mean that music is a language.

In a remark of 1947, Wittgenstein says that the parallel between grammar in language and musical grammar (“harmony”) does not allow one to equate music and language. It is only “sometimes” that music resembles a language (à propos Josef Labor)⁴.

Music as a model for criticizing an intuitive grasp of content

Another important gain is brought together with this principle. There is no question here of attempting to express a content. Grasping a content is a private affair⁵. To “think sense” is to think without referring to a content (*Meinen*), and consequently understanding rules out intuiting a content.

Meaning, Walter de Gruyter, Berlin/New-York, 2002, ch.6, pp.152. The terminology of “Scheinbilder” appears in Hertz, *Die Prinzipien der Mechanik*, Leipzig 1910, p.1.

3 In “Pictures and Form” (1956), ch.7 of *Approaches to Wittgenstein*, Routledge, 2002, pp.61.

4 See “Josef Labor und die Musik in der Wittgenstein-Familie”, by Martin Alberin *Wittgenstein und Musik*, Haymon-Verlag, Innsbruck, 2000, pp.121. See also below.

5 As Bolzano, criticizing Kant’s intuition, demonstrated long ago and Frege after him.

The same holds true for music which here is to be considered in structural terms as a conceptual kind of script. The philosophical context of this analogy of language with music tells us that indeed music needs not to deal with any content to be ultimately expressed. Music indeed teaches us better than any other domain of art, what it is like to project the possibility of sense, formally speaking, with no access to content. So far, the *Tractatus* introduces music as a key for eliciting internal similarity while later on, music will take place in a comparative procedure of inspecting *Verwandschaften*. Yet comparing as a grammatical method elaborated in the early thirties, will remain a kind of projection in Wittgenstein's later use of the expression "projection" although with nuances allowing a looser use of examples from which the invariance of similarity has disappeared.

It is not abusing words to say that notes model the musical Idea, while, considered from the opposite side, notes are projections of it. Notes are indeed a kind of functional relations, like propositional signs in a symbolism. For the same reason, why not say that the musical staff resembles the logical space and constitutes a coordinate-space with values on a scale, so that on the staff, notes could be said to occupy a logical place.

What music and language have in common is articulation of features, or perhaps, articulatedness as a feature, something that belongs to a logical grammar of inscription of marks in an abstract space in virtue of conventional laws of projection. Thus, under the aspect of articulatedness, music resembles logical grammar. So far, a modification of the conception of grammar could entail a modification of the conception of music.

Let us add that the author of the *Tractatus* speaks about music having in mind the written tradition of music in the guise of the score, that is a script to be put on the same footing as a notational system in logic. To put it in isomorphic terms, music whether ineffable or not is the set of forms of projections of the same thing, such as CD, score, a musical performance in a concert hall, the musical idea, and even, Wittgenstein adds, the sound waves, say Beethoven's 9th symphony. What all these projections have in common is the fact that they are projections of the same thing, they share the same logical multiplicity. As such, music stands on the opposite side of temporal things like other species of conceptual script. It is timeless.

Music, as the domain of self-expression: formal content

We then have an answer to J. Schulte's question how music could be an "almost perfect model"⁶? Wittgenstein indeed defends a view of the exemplarity of music according to which music is the best illustration of the possibility for higher "Ideas" to be projected into self-expressible forms of possibility of sense, although the content remains ineffable.

As is suggested by Gilles Granger at the end of his *Forme, opération, objet* (Vrin, 1968), a book in which he advocates a symbolic conception of knowledge, mathematics and music are to be compared as both of them, he says, deal with formal possibility of sense, or what he calls "formal content". "Formal content" is not a content to be intuitively grasped nor an object for a reference in the realm of science but rather a form which, at a higher type-level, becomes a content for another form (what for example Carnap's *Aufbau* hierarchy exhibits). This conception, he says, fits mathematics as well as arts. Although he rejects type-levels in language for reasons I cannot develop here, Wittgenstein would agree. As a matter of fact, his conception of the formal possibility of sense has strongly influenced Granger. Apart from technicalities relevant to type-levels or so, Wittgenstein would certainly be closer to Paul Valéry when, in his condemnation of the "philosopher-poets", the French writer advances his vigorous "critique of content", defining art as a pure formal display.

An autonomous prose

To sum up this point, Wittgenstein characterizes the internal relations by the impossibility of representing the common logical form and this in analogy to the musical Idea⁷. Note that in the proposition 4.014 and following, *Musikalischer Gedanke* is Schönberg's own expression. In "Style and Idea" (1950), a collection of texts edited by Leonard Stein, a pupil of Schönberg and director of the Schönberg Institute at Los Angeles, there is an article from 1933, in fact an essay on new music as opposed to old-fashioned music that was among the first papers given by the composer in the United States, then in Boston. The word "Idea" stands for the German *Gedanke* which occurs in the original manuscript of an earlier talk in Prague. Far from being a subjective representation, as Adorno puts it, the musical Idea is projected as is the CD, the performance, the score, the sound waves. As Schönberg puts

6 In *Experience and Expression*, Oxford, 1993, ch.4, pp.37, 50–53.

7 *Musikalischer Gedanke, Tractatus*, 4.014ff.

it, it is relevant to a “logic” of relations : such are the theme, the motif and variations together with their developments⁸, and all that comes to serve the Idea in a constructive but objectively expressive manner. This means that, as Charles Rosen⁹ writes in his small book on Schönberg, construction here is not incompatible with expression if the sentimental subjective sense of expression is ruled out. In this constructive sense and upon this condition only, the German musicologist and critic of Adorno, Carl Dahlhaus, is not wrong to use the words “expressive content” in his book entitled *Schönberg*, (a posthumous title for different versions the first of which appeared in Mayence in 1978)¹⁰, to designate what stands behind the formal relations of sounds and the network of dependencies they form as regards the constructed system of the musical work. What Schönberg here had in mind, he writes, is Bach. This formal dependence itself conforms to the process of objectivation, which, in turn, prompts one to go beyond, to overcome the notational protocols themselves, what Adorno critically calls the formal code of a composition. To this extent, the work stands as a kind of autonomous prose, yet a non-textual sort of prose owing nothing to words and their meanings, and exclusively made of sound relations.

The expression “musical prose” is Schönberg’s. Dahlhaus uses it as the title of a chapter written in 1964 of his above-mentioned *Schönberg*. Being irreducible to mere chains of symbols, musical prose mirrors the structure of the whole, saving as Logic, the “great Form”. To attain the latter, one has to pass through or overcome the notational schemas. The same move is present in Wittgenstein, as Dahlhaus himself says¹¹. What the composer should do with notes looks like what Wittgenstein recommends at the end of his *Tractatus*: only after having overcome (*überwinden*) the propositions or having thrown away the ladder, is the reader able to understand the subject-matter of the whole treatise.

Here is another logical feature of music, which justifies its comparison with a non-temporal logic. So far, logic could also designate the system in which the musical Idea or *Gedanke* finds itself incorporated. In short, Wittgenstein says with Frege’s objectivist vocabulary of *Gedanke* applied to music what Schopenhauer expressed in terms of objectivation of the tran-

8 See further on our reference to *The Musical Idea*, ed. by P. Carpenter and S. Neff.

9 See his *Schönberg*, Editions de Minuit, Paris 1979.

10 I am referring to the French translation of Dahlhaus’ *Schönberg*, Ph. Albera and V. Barras (eds.), Editions Contrechamps, Genève 1997.

11 See his *Schönberg*, op. cit. in French p.36 and note on Wittgenstein, p.42

scendental anonymous subject of the will to characterize what he called “absolute music”. This Schopenhauerian filiation that Schönberg also inherits, makes us understand in what sense music so defined is to be understood as “ein Ding sub specie aeternitatis”¹² or in other terms a kind of organic “whole” at which Wittgenstein confesses he has not ceased to aim¹³. In contrast with scientists, the object in view can be attained but through different “aspects”, from different standpoints.

2. Music and grammar

Music is not yet what it will become in the so-called second philosophy, e.g. a paradigm of the understanding of a sentence in language, considered as a meaningful gesture orientated to a goal. Music still stands as the illustrative part of the argument against the analyticity of sense, in a strategy which aims at bringing out the Formal at the expense of the notations used in formalism; yet with the help of them, a formula also used to qualify Schönberg’s style of composition.

By reasserting the same point in his *Languages of art*¹⁴, Nelson Goodman testifies the striking force of exemplarity of art, especially architecture, in the domain of philosophical logic. Evidently, his famous principle of projectibility without *which* art would not exist comes from Wittgenstein. His symbolic conception applies to the work of art viewed as the result of a “world-making” activity which, in many ways is conventional and does not tell us which world naturally speaking, the versions we make are the versions of.¹⁵

Clearly enough, Wittgenstein would not have chosen music as an analogue for the projecting form of sense, if he had not conceived it as an autonomous art, an art the forms of which are self-sufficient and which therefore constitutes a valuable model of comparison to the completeness of expression of sense (*Satz-Sinnes*), in the limits of what is meaningfully expressible.

One could find this idea current in Wittgenstein’s time, in Eduard Hanslick’s

12 See Rudolf Haller’s *Facta und Ficta*, Reclam 1986, ch. “Das Kunstwerk als Gegenstand sub specie aeternitatis”.

13 “[E]ach phrase I am writing always aims at the whole”, is an “aspect” of it; see his *Vermischte Bemerkungen*, 1930.

14 Nelson Goodman, *Languages of Art. An Approach to a Theory of Symbols*. Hackett, Indianapolis/Cambridge 1976.

15 See Quine’s criticism: we obtain world-versions which are not versions of *the* world, in *Theories and Things*, Harvard 1981; also Goodman’s “Ways of Worldmaking”, in *Languages of Art*, op. cit. p.96.

so-called formal theory. Hanslick, a well-known historian of music at the end the 19th century, wrote about “The Beautiful in music” (*Das Schöne in der Musik*, orig. 1854, a widely read pamphlet against Wagner’s writings of the same years)¹⁶. Eduard Hanslick played an important role in the development of the popularization of this idea of autonomy, especially in the field of music. It is interesting to see Carl Dahlhaus himself mentioning the cult of “absolute music”, as expressed by Schopenhauer, which Hanslick inherits and which will turn into a dominant “paradigm” (in Kuhn’s sense) in Europe throughout the 19th century. Hanslick is considered the first “formalist” in musical aesthetics because he pointed out the formal aspect of expression (form is content, content is form, he says, in music)¹⁷ in contrast with what the older theory of sentiments considered as musical content. “Absolute music”, in fact, meant not only independence from the meaning of words, but music in which the instrumental dimension is the most important. This view which prevailed in romantic music at the end of the 19th century was bequeathed to the early XXth century spirit of modern music as Carl Dahlhaus shows.¹⁸ In a way, Roger Scruton in his *Aesthetics of music* (p.357) recalls the importance of formal content by asserting that “the experience of the musical is this very inseparability of form and content”. The way it survives in Wittgenstein’s conception, shows to what extent absolute music which constitutes the Schopenhauerian background of his views on music, still had a romantic flavour (rather than modernist). “Autonomy” of music might well be a vestige of romanticism in the logico-linguistic garb of modernity. Why music? Because, he later writes, it indeed is “*die raffinierteste aller Künste*”¹⁹.

A breach in the realm of timeless things?

I have also stressed the fact that, being a model of autonomy of sense, music is a-temporal. As the reader of the *Tractatus* knows, things occurring in time

16 I am here to *Du Beau dans la musique*, French translation introduced by J-J. Nattiez, ed. Bourgois, 1986.

17 Nietzsche said approximately the same: content for the philosopher appears as form to the artist, and content for the artist can appear like form from a philosophical point of view.

18 *L'idée de la musique absolue*, Editions Contrechamps, 1997; French translation of *Die Idee der absoluten Musik*.

19 See under this title, the chapter “Absolute vs Programm-Musik”, pp.170 , preceding “Aspekthören”, in *Wittgenstein und die Musik*, Ludwig Wittgenstein-Rudolf Koder correspondence, ed. McGuinness (with M. Alber and Monika Seekircher), by Martin Alber, see above op. cit.

escape language. Therefore, there is no place for the temporality of a grammar in the *Tractatus* inasmuch as logical grammar itself is timeless. Wittgenstein's later assertion according to which "time is imbedded in grammar" in one of his *Grammatical Remarks* (ch. VII), could not be formulated at the time of the *Tractatus* in which Time as well as Space are relevant to internal relations only. Do we understand the sentence "red and green at the same place at the same time" which illustrates a case of logical incompatibility, as an expression having a temporal meaning? Certainly not. The expression "at the same time" does not speak temporally. We take it as a modality of a primary formal relation of impossible coincidence between opposite colours. The present of such a coincidence is atemporal.

Yet, as we have noticed, the so-called *musikalischer Gedanke* (an expression we also read in Schönberg) rather stands as a projected entity—let us call it a projected expression of musical thought—and not an ineffable and timeless superior model lying high above projected forms. As such, it is on the same footing as the score, performance, etc. This is an interesting feature which shows how deeply music—although it has something formal, since relation of similarity is all what counts between the projected entities—belongs to a realm of things that are susceptible of modifications. So far, what music "expresses" is to be understood. That is why to question expression and elicit how, by hearing a melody, one "thinks in music" (as in language) is one and the same contention.

Understanding a phrase in language as hearing a melody

Wittgenstein insists on saying that what music "expresses" is nothing interior, nothing contained in a musical phrase as a kernel in a nutshell, nor something melody would transitively "say". At this point, it is the analysis of the phenomenon of understanding which is to give us the key. Understanding a phrase in a language is indeed "viel verwandter" with understanding a musical phrase. The point is presented in § 527 of the *Philosophical Investigations* as a grammatical one. Music therefore helps to characterize comparability of understandings at a grammatical level.

A subsequent remark of Wittgenstein stresses a difficulty: comparability to what extent? In the sole case of music, you might be tempted to answer the question of what is common to them. You could, for instance, allege the subsistence of a community of structure of the "melodic line": "die selbe Linie", a community of pattern (Anscombe's translation) in strength and tempo, *this* strength and *this* tempo. So far, such a mode of comparison

introduces a game of comparison of examples that owes nothing to any kind of deductive procedure. Moreover, nothing underlying the very possibility of comparison is to be expected that would justify such an approach to affinity of structure between phrases. That's why Wittgenstein is soon confronted with the problem of non-transmissibility of a content which blocks the very possibility of intersubstituability of musical phrases (through the device of paraphrasing them)²⁰. A first reason is that the problem is not that of grasping a content, and the second one is that in order to understand what music says, you need to compare. Comparing is the only available means given the impossibility as we have said of grasping a content in the sentence. Yet, one is rather bound to experience the limit of comparability itself. His question turns into the following: in what sense, given the fact that understanding is also translating a sentence into another sentence which is equivalent in meaning, could this replacement be said to be impossible (§ 531, *Ph. Invest*) especially in music and poetry?

In reply to this question, we have to look at the grammar of music as a certain species of projection in a space of variations. Through music, we now deal with what Wittgenstein characterizes in a remark of 1932 (*Culture and Value*, 1932) as a kind of “temporality imbedded in grammar”.

What one has to understand is this: on the one hand, the notes written on the stave are what they are, in a necessary disposition that could not be otherwise like the symbols in a logical script. This unchangeable feature is one thing. On the other hand, you could, in the perspective of grammar (which is no longer strictly logical), introduce variations of something which could be wrongly considered as a fixed paradigm, but does not in any case constitute a pre-existing invariant. Thus the production of new “Gestalten” takes place in time. So far, it is important to repeat the phrase in question although repetitions consist in gesturing differently at and around the same motto. (See *C § V* 1946, 52 e)

Do we here still deal with the autonomy of the musical? Yes, but in another sense, or in another dimension, in the dimension of time. What is played with this strength and this tempo is differently reproducible, but not as such identically repeatable. The criterion of autonomy has become non-repeatability. Something still resists equivalence of reproduction of the same entity since there is no content contained in the melody; the idea that there

20 See Aaron Ridley's *Philosophy of Music*, Edinburgh, 2004, part 2, IV: “Paraphrase and music”, pp.35. A target is what he calls “automania” (Peter Kivy and others are his target).

would be a pre-existing paradigm clearly is an illusion. What is now to be understood is that re-playing a theme rather introduces a new part of our language, something we learn as a new gesture. The non-transmissibility of an invariant content is and remains a feature of autonomy, but differently understood, that is understood in the realm of grammar applied to music.

What then is experienced? Let us look at passages extracted from Man. 1945 or 1946, n° 229 § 913 (Hallett p.533) and *Lectures and Conversations on Aesthetics* ... (1938, p.34 in Cyril Barrett's translation): I admire a minuet. I can't say "Take another, it does the same thing". What do you mean? It is not the same!²¹

Note that Schönberg says similar things about experiencing a "periode" on the basis of musical examples (Mozart, Schumann) in fragments on *Musikalischer Gedanke*²². A long passage about "Fasslichkeit" and "Zusammenhang"—e.g. comprehensibility and coherence—develops these two essential features of a period having a beginning and an end while it corresponds to one single breathing of breath as a unity displayed in a certain time musically measured²³.

What we are dealing with here is musical aspects comparable to aspects of the expression of a face (§ 536). What is understood resists transmission, as we have acknowledged. There is an un-replaceable aspect in music which constitutes an essential obstacle to transmissibility (Übermittelbarkeit) in music, although it is no longer "something" invariant and pre-existing, remaining the same in multiplicity. What is to be destroyed is precisely this very image of experiencing a content in music on which some interpreters would be tempted to ground the impossibility of defining it (because then it would be something intuitive). The target is less a critique of a Bergsonian grasp of intuitive content than of instant-solipsism of the Schlickian sort, that is a certain kind of phenomenology. But one could also consider that musical experience ultimately meets that impossibility in a specific audible manner.

21 Manuscripts 1945 or 1946 (n° 229, § 913, cf. G. Hallett, *Companion to Wittgenstein's Philosophical Investigations*, p.533): "Play it as though it were an answer and then one perhaps makes a gesture". The example of the minuet can also be found in *Lectures and Conversations on Aesthetics* 1938, p.3 of the English edition by Cyril Barrett.

22 See above op. cit.: *The Musical Idea*, p.143. Fragments on musical thought, "Musikalische Gedanke" written between 1923 and 1934–36.

23 See here Schönberg's later *Fundamentals of musical composition*, Gerald Strong and Leonard Stein (eds.), Faber Paperbacks, London/Boston, 1967.

3. The temporal dimension of music

From such considerations, one might infer that they shake the principle of autonomy of the musical as we have defined it above. My hypothesis here is that they modify but not ruin it. The critique of grasping a content music helps to formulate, does not radically put this principle in danger, but rather offers a different way of appraising the kind of paradoxical process that is involved in expressing what is understood and understanding what is expressed through movements or signs of understanding, and performance of playing what is understood (which implies a continuity between aesthetics and creation).

So far, it is very important that the so-called “object” of understanding is always related for Wittgenstein to the situation of hearing a melody. The melody behaves like a phrase with a beginning, a middle, and an end. The display of these moments occurs in time, but a time which is to be phenomenologically qualified. To assert that “language evolves (gets unwinded, unrolled) along time”, is to assert something undefinable. As “What is time?” is just impossible to answer (*Philos. Remarks*, ch. VII, § 69).

Hence the necessity to deal with time through the experience of hearing a melody, even if one cannot define this experience objectively.

Two contrasting aspects of hearing a melody

Hearing a melody implies two contrasting aspects:

1. perceiving the unity of something complex through a motto or motive closely associated with a rhythmical form like an arabesque Wittgenstein himself draws: \sim ²⁴, and “Das Moment” here equates “Motiv”;
2. grasping different moments in a temporal flux.

Concerning the first one, Husserl would advocate the instantaneity of the unity of consciousness as an act, and as regards the second feature, consciousness as an experienced process in duration, which lasts as long as moments occur in succession. (See his analysis of consciousness of time in his *Phenomenological Lectures on the intimate consciousness of time 1905–1910*). Husserl displays the modalities of the consciousness of time, as he says. Grounding, as Wittgenstein does, his analysis on hearing a melody, he distinguishes an

24 In *Vermischte Bemerkungen*, 1946, p.52e.

instantaneous grasp of temporal objects from a consciousness of “continua” of flowing phenomena (1905, first part of the Lectures 1905–1910).

Both “aspects”, instantaneity and flow are discussed by Wittgenstein. I cannot examine in details the discussion of these two aspects within the scope of “hearing a melody”. I will only show how music is of a great help in grasping the kind of present-time one deals with when understanding a phrase by playing it in a language-game, a situation the musician knows and experiences in composition.

My hypothesis is that the kind of present here in question is different from the a-temporal kind of present involved in internal relations, as when we say “red and green cannot be in the same place *at the same time*”—an assertion that holds for logical reasons that Wittgenstein will discuss in the *Philosophical Remarks*, ch. VIII (the main argument being that there cannot be a contradiction between and within such internal—elementary—relations).

A game in the present-time, in the case of hearing a melody

One has to remember that the aspectual experience of a “seeing-as” implies an “alteration” = “Verändern” of what is seen, and that’s the link with imagination “eine Ähnlichkeit mit dem Vorstellen”, Wittgenstein writes §§ 992–997, *Remarks on Philosophy of Psychology*. The same with “so hören”: you must hear this melody “diese Melodie” like this and play it correspondingly: “dann auch entsprechend spielen” (ibid. § 995). So far, the principle of inseparability of form and content we have recalled above, sounds differently. It is no longer guaranteed by logic. The key of the inseparability lies in the response in reaction to an effect on the hearer. The salience of an internal movement now testifies “ein Eindruck”, produced together with “so hören”, as an aspect manifested through gesturing (ibid. § 997). This process of “moving with expressive music” which reminds us of Hanslick’s famous “moving sound-forms” (“tönend-bewegte Formen”)²⁵ provides a form of “recognition of expression”. However, there would not be such an ability to move with music without an “emotional type of education” (Roger Scruton, *The Aesthetics of music*, p. 357), as such irreducible to scientific expertise or mere sociological conditions of an aristocratic sort.

By referring to moving, Wittgenstein turns his back on phenomenological solutions (among them Husserl’s) brought in terms of an experience of consciousness such as instantaneity or flowing or duration. It is true however

25 In French: “formes sonores en mouvement”.

that in these respects, William James is a better target. Yet, the production of an *Eindruck* under the salient impact of sounds in language does not suffice to make the recognition of form possible. Form has accomplished its full cycle only when what is striking me has become mine: this is a phenomenon of incorporation or assimilation as Wittgenstein himself puts it. A “gesture” is neither innate nor instilled from outside, but “assimiliert” through use of sounds (*Last Writings*, § 712 (I)). This phenomenon in turn finds its internal temporality in an experience of a “so phrasiert”, an experience from which the previous features of logical articulatedness have left room for a sequence of beats. Wittgenstein is interested in measuring time with beats²⁶, in other words in “regularity” even though it is not a metronomic kind of regularity. As long as music means an art of “organizing duration with sound-elements”, time so understood seems a possible object of description and one could easily talk about a musical temporality as a specific kind of time.

Yet Wittgenstein was not mainly interested in time as a physical system although his considerations on the sounds of language, in his later period of philosophy of psychology, seem to open morphological questions. The early quantified approach to sounds and rhythms especially, into which he investigated under Charles Myers’ influence and guidance in the latter’s laboratories around 1912 in Manchester, had rather driven him away from such experimental investigations. The reason is that what has to be grasped is not so much the external regularity of quantifiable sounds and rhythms, as “ein unartikulierter Fortklang eines Gedankens”, “reverberation of non-articulated thought”, in language as in music, that is precisely “aspects” (*Rem. Philos. Psychol.* § 1036).

It is only through a common world of shared forms of life conveyed by such aspects (that is culture) that a musical phrase can be understood while the hearer can expressively manifest what he understands by a gesture. Let us now focus on this apparent simultaneity between understanding what is expressed and expressing what is understood, at the level of the hearer. A phenomenological approach as well as a physical one will not succeed in uncovering these features of so-called “concomitance” (*Gleichzeitiges Bestehen, Zusammenwirkung*) or correspondence (*entsprechend*) between the “moment” when I hear a melody and the moment when I make something

26 It is not impossible that Wittgenstein here follows a track which stems from Helmholtz’s dynamics of sound, through Hanslick’s conception, which Helmholtz praised very much (as shown in his introduction to *The Psychophysiology of Audition*, Heidelberg, 1868).

with what I understand when I hear it (*Zettel*, §§ 159–162). And this does not mean that these two processes of understanding and hearing occur “at the same time”. It is rather a question of co-presence than a real simultaneity, a co-presence of an anthropological sort, like in Wittgenstein’s *Remarks on Frazer’s The Golden Bough*, the fact that a tick “goes together” with a dog, a relation meaning that “one element cannot be without the other element”. Such a phenomenon of say “concomitance” rather looks like a ritual sort of being together, than like a temporal simultaneity. In any case, it is not *a process*, to be grasped as such.

We have now understood that “culture”, rather than a content, is “all that is contained”, that “world” in a musical phrase. So far, temporality here has to be appraised from a cultural standpoint and this is what music teaches us. This anthropological “lesson”, Wittgenstein had already drawn it from Charles Myers. One also knows that, as he acknowledged later, Wittgenstein who experimented on rhythms gradually lost confidence in the fecundity of experimental science to which Charles Myers had long been devoting himself with his ethnological investigations of music in primitive societies.

From a musical standpoint, given that hearing a melody means grasping a whole world (*Zettel*, § 173)²⁷ on this double mode of understanding what is expressed and expressing what is understood, it is clear that the temporality we are here dealing with is a musical sort of constructed temporality. Many musicians would agree at this point. The world in question is certainly not the physical one, nor a world of acquired gestures that have become familiar in the sense of conventional moves.

Musicians, especially contemporary (using a syntax of sounds) would here agree on saying that:

1. Musical temporality is specific. It is not time in general.
2. It is experienced through a combination of hearing and performing as the two facets of a same process in composition.
3. Music offers an image of such a construction.

²⁷ “A whole world is contained in a musical phrase”, but, Wittgenstein adds into brackets: “it depends who says it”. This addition of course requires another study. See “‘Tout un monde réside dans une phrase musicale ...’ L’approche wittgensteiniennne du motif à partir de la musique”, our article published in *TLE*, a French review (publ. by the University of Paris 8-St Denis) on theory, Linguistics and Teaching, “Motifs, Motif”, autumn 2005, n° 23, dir. by Yves Abrioux.

Yet the corresponding act of playing what is heard as this or that, a beginning or an end, for example, takes place in a certain kind of present (*Zettel*, § 159, see further § 162). What sort of “present”²⁸ are we talking about if it is not of a specious present as in a phenomenological approach to present, nor of a flowing present or intuitive duration (differently assumed by Bergson, William James, Schlick)?

The “present” of the game we are talking about here is the present of a formal accomplishment through movements. Music is played by the instrumentist and the composer, and is heard by the hearer. In creation, this co-presence is a necessity. Music is the domain where this copresence is especially required. Only art or music makes this co-presence possible by spontaneously achieving a fulfilment like that of an intentional disposition in following a rule “without thinking about it” (“sans y penser”). It is as though the act of understanding was dissolving the paradox of following a rule because in creating a musical sequence or piece, understanding and performing are two actions linked in such a way that they become the object of a unique command or order, dispensing the creator with explicit justifications. This is why musicians often say that a work of art doesn’t need justifications in terms of particular intentions.

In absence of a describable experience of meaning, music also testifies the role of a first-person direct knowledge (John McDowell), which resists an analysis in terms of knowing-how or knowing-that. Apart from the negative lessons music helps us to draw (no grasp of an intuitive content, no introspection, etc ...) which are available in the case of language, musical understanding in particular of a phrase associated to hearing a melody, positively shows what it is like to understand meaning through grasping aspects, but also contributes to constructing an image of temporality which is compatible with the two-fold phenomenon of hearing-gesturing. But in no case, should we expect from music a better conception of what time essentially consists in.

28 In these respects (see the French musicologist Jean-Paul Olive’s “Les présents musicaux”, in *Filigranes* 2005, p.33) the case of Bach’s “Musical Offer” seems very telling.