

music whose character was comic or satirical. Beckmesser's music in Wagner's *Die Meistersinger* would probably elicit this type of interpretive understanding.³⁵ In a piece whose character admitted no such purposeful blunders, the second response would probably be elicited.

CONSCIOUS AND UNCONSCIOUS EXPECTATIONS

In the light of these observations it is clear that an expectation is not a blind, unthinking conditioned reflex. Expectation frequently involves a high order of mental activity. The fulfillment of a habit response, in art as well as in daily life, requires judgment and cognition both of the stimulus itself and of the situation in which it acts. The stimulus as a physical thing becomes a stimulus in the world of behavior only in so far as the mind of the perceiver is able to relate it, on the one hand, to the habit responses which the perceiver has developed and, on the other hand, to the particular stimulus situation. This is clear as soon as one considers that the same physical stimulus may call forth different tendencies in different stylistic contexts or in different situations within one and the same stylistic context. For example, a modal cadential progression will arouse one set of expectations in the musical style of the sixteenth century and quite another in the style of the nineteenth century. Likewise the same musical progression will evoke one set of expectations at the beginning of a piece and another at the end.

Expectation then is a product of the habit responses developed in connection with particular musical styles and of the modes of human perception, cognition, and response—the psychological laws of mental life.³⁶

The mental activity involved in the perception of and response to music need not, however, be conscious. "... the intellectual satisfaction which the listener derives from continually following and anticipating the composer's intentions—now, to see his expectations fulfilled, and now, to see himself agreeably mistaken ... this intellectual flux and reflux, this perpetual giving and receiving takes place unconsciously, and with the rapidity of lightning flashes."³⁷ So long as expectations are satisfied without delay, so

long as tendencies are uninhibited, though intelligence is clearly and necessarily involved in the perception and understanding of the stimulus situation, the response will probably remain unconscious.

Mental activity tends to become conscious when reflection and deliberation are involved in the completion of the response pattern, that is, when automatic behavior is disturbed because a tendency has been inhibited. "Impulsion forever boosted on its forward way would run its course thoughtless, and dead to emotion. . . . The only way it can become aware of its nature and its goal is by obstacles surmounted and means employed."³⁸

But even when a habit response is inhibited, conscious awareness of the mental activity involved in the perception of and response to the stimulus situation is by no means inevitable. Intellectual experience (the conscious awareness of one's own expectations or, objectively, of the tendencies of the music), as distinguished from intellectual activity, is largely a product of the listener's own attitude toward his responses and hence toward the stimuli and mental activities which bring them into existence. That is to say, some listeners, whether because of training or natural psychological inclination, are disposed to rationalize their responses, to make experience self-conscious; others are not so disposed. If intellectual activity is allowed to remain unconscious, then the mental tensions and the deliberations involved when a tendency is inhibited are experienced as feeling or affect rather than as conscious cognition (see pp. 38 f.).

Having shown that music arouses tendencies and thus fulfills the conditions necessary for the arousal of affect (see p. 22) and having demonstrated how this is accomplished, we can now state one of the basic hypotheses of this study. Namely: Affect or emotion-felt is aroused when an expectation—a tendency to respond—activated by the musical stimulus situation, is temporarily inhibited or permanently blocked.

As noted earlier (see pp. 22–23) in musical experience the same stimulus, the music, activates tendencies, inhibits them, and provides meaningful and relevant resolutions for them. This is of particular importance from a methodological standpoint. For it means

that granted listeners who have developed reaction patterns appropriate to the work in question, the structure of the affective response to a piece of music can be studied by examining the music itself.

Once those sound successions common to a culture, a style, or a particular work have been ascertained, then, if the customary succession is presented and completed without delay, it can be assumed that, since no tendency would have been inhibited, the listener would not respond in an affective way. If, on the other hand, the sound succession fails to follow its customary course, or if it involves obscurity or ambiguity, then it can be assumed that the listener's tendencies would be inhibited or otherwise upset and that the tensions arising in this process would be experienced as affect, provided that they were not rationalized as conscious intellectual experience.

In other words, the customary or expected progression of sounds can be considered as a norm, which from a stylistic point of view it is; and alteration in the expected progression can be considered as a deviation. Hence deviations can be regarded as emotional or affective stimuli.

The importance of this "objective" point of view of musical experience is clear. It means that once the norms of a style have been ascertained, the study and analysis of the affective content of a particular work in that style can be made without continual and explicit reference to the responses of the listener or critic. That is, subjective content can be discussed objectively.⁸⁹

The Meaning of Music

THE PROBLEM OF MEANING IN MUSIC

The meaning of music has of late been the subject of much confused argument and controversy. The controversy has stemmed largely from disagreements as to what music communicates, while the confusion has resulted for the most part from a lack of clarity as to the nature and definition of meaning itself.

The debates as to what music communicates have centered around the question of whether music can designate, depict, or otherwise communicate referential concepts, images, experiences, and emo-

tional states. This is the old argument between the absolutists and the referentialists (see pp. 1 f.).

Because it has not appeared problematical to them, the referentialists have not as a rule explicitly considered the problem of musical meaning. Musical meaning according to the referentialists lies in the relationship between a musical symbol or sign and the extra-musical thing which it designates.

Since our concern in this study is not primarily with the referential meaning of music, suffice it to say that the disagreement between the referentialists and the absolutists is, as was pointed out at the beginning of this chapter, the result of a tendency toward philosophical monism rather than the result of any logical incompatibility. Both designative and non-designative meanings arise out of musical experience, just as they do in other types of aesthetic experience.

The absolutists have contended that the meaning of music lies specifically, and some would assert exclusively, in the musical processes themselves. For them musical meaning is non-designative. But in what sense these processes are meaningful, in what sense a succession or sequence of non-referential musical stimuli can be said to give rise to meaning, they have been unable to state with either clarity or precision. They have also failed to relate musical meaning to other kinds of meaning—to meaning in general. This failure has led some critics to assert that musical meaning is a thing apart, different in some unexplained way from all other kinds of meaning. This is simply an evasion of the real issue. For it is obvious that if the term "meaning" is to have any significance at all as applied to music, then it must have the same significance as when applied to other kinds of experience.

Without reviewing all the untenable positions to which writers have tenaciously adhered, it seems fair to say that much of the confusion and uncertainty as to the nature of non-referential musical meaning has resulted from two fallacies. On the one hand, there has been a tendency to locate meaning exclusively in one aspect of the communicative process; on the other hand, there has been a propensity to regard all meanings arising in human communication as designative, as involving symbolism of some sort.

Since these difficulties can be best resolved in the light of a general definition of meaning, let us begin with such a definition: "... anything acquires meaning if it is connected with, or indicates, or refers to, something beyond itself, so that its full nature points to and is revealed in that connection."⁴⁰

Meaning is thus not a property of things. It cannot be located in the stimulus alone. The same stimulus may have many different meanings. To a geologist a large rock may indicate that at one time a glacier began to recede at a given spot; to a farmer the same rock may point to the necessity of having the field cleared for plowing; and to the sculptor the rock may indicate the possibility of artistic creation. A rock, a word, or motion in and of itself, merely as a stimulus, is meaningless.

Thus it is pointless to ask what the intrinsic meaning of a single tone or a series of tones is. Purely as physical existences they are meaningless. They become meaningful only in so far as they point to, indicate, or imply something beyond themselves.

Nor can meaning be located exclusively in the objects, events, or experiences which the stimulus indicates, refers to, or implies. The meaning of the rock is the product of the relationship between the stimulus and the thing it points to or indicates.

Though the perception of a relationship can only arise as the result of some individual's mental behavior, the relationship itself is not to be located in the mind of the perceiver. The meanings observed are not subjective. Thus the relationships existing between the tones themselves or those existing between the tones and the things they designate or connote, though a product of cultural experience, are real connections existing objectively in culture.⁴¹ They are not arbitrary connections imposed by the capricious mind of the particular listener.

Meaning, then, is not in either the stimulus, or what it points to, or the observer. Rather it arises out of what both Cohen and Mead have called the "triadic" relationship between (1) an object or stimulus; (2) that to which the stimulus points—that which is its consequent; and (3) the conscious observer.

Discussions of the meaning of music have also been muddled by the failure to state explicitly what musical stimuli indicate or point

to. A stimulus may indicate events or consequences which are different from itself in kind, as when a word designates or points to an object or action which is not itself a word. Or a stimulus may indicate or imply events or consequences which are of the same kind as the stimulus itself, as when a dim light on the eastern horizon heralds the coming of day. Here both the antecedent stimulus and the consequent event are natural phenomena. The former type of meaning may be called designative, the latter embodied. Because most of the meanings which arise in human communication are of the designative type, employing linguistic signs or the iconic signs of the plastic arts, numerous critics have failed to realize that this is not necessarily or exclusively the case. This mistake has led even avowed absolutists to allow designation to slip in through the secret door of semantic chicanery.⁴²

But even more important than designative meaning is what we have called embodied meaning. From this point of view what a musical stimulus or a series of stimuli indicate and point to are not extramusical concepts and objects but other musical events which are about to happen. That is, one musical event (be it a tone, a phrase, or a whole section) has meaning because it points to and makes us expect another musical event. This is what music means from the viewpoint of the absolutist.

MUSIC AND MEANING

Embodied musical meaning is, in short, a product of expectation. If, on the basis of past experience, a present stimulus leads us to expect a more or less definite consequent musical event, then that stimulus has meaning.⁴³

From this it follows that a stimulus or gesture which does not point to or arouse expectations of a subsequent musical event or consequent is meaningless. Because expectation is largely a product of stylistic experience, music in a style with which we are totally unfamiliar is meaningless.⁴⁴

However, once the aesthetic attitude has been brought into play, very few gestures actually appear to be meaningless so long as the listener has some experience with the style of the work in question. For so long as a stimulus is possible within any known style,

the listener will do his best to relate it to the style, to understand its meaning.

In and of themselves, for example, the opening chords of Beethoven's Third Symphony have no particular musical stylistic tendency. They establish no pattern of motion, arouse no tensions toward a particular fulfillment. Yet as part of the total aesthetic cultural act of attention they are meaningful. For since they are the first chords of a piece, we not only expect more music but our expectations are circumscribed by the limitations of the style which we believe the piece to be in and by the psychological demand for a more palpable pattern (see chaps ii-v).

Thus the phrase "past experience," used in the definition of meaning given above, must be understood in a broad sense. It includes the immediate past of the particular stimulus or gesture; that which has already taken place in this particular work to condition the listener's opinion of the stimulus and hence his expectations as to the impending, consequent event. In the example given above, the past was silence. But this fact of the past is just as potent in conditioning expectation as a whole section of past events.⁴⁵ The phrase "past experience" also refers to the more remote, but ever present, past experience of similar musical stimuli and similar musical situations in other works. That is it refers to those past experiences which constitute our sense and knowledge of style. The phrase also comprehends the dispositions and beliefs which the listener brings to the musical experience (see pp. 73 ff.) as well as the laws of mental behavior which govern his organization of stimuli into patterns and the expectations aroused on the basis of those patterns (see chaps. iii and iv).

The words "consequent musical event" must be understood to include: (1) those consequents which are envisaged or expected; (2) the events which do, in fact, follow the stimulus, whether they were the ones envisaged or not; and (3) the more distant ramifications or events which, because the total series of gestures is presumed to be causally connected, are considered as being the later consequences of the stimulus in question. Seen in this light, the meaning of the stimulus is not confined to or limited by the initial triadic relationship out of which it arises. As the later stages of the

musical process establish new relationships with the stimulus, new meanings arise. These later meanings coexist in memory with the earlier ones and, combining with them, constitute the meaning of the work as a total experience.

In this development three stages of meaning may be distinguished.

"Hypothetical meanings" are those which arise during the act of expectation. Since what is envisaged is a product of the probability relationships which exist as part of style (see pp. 45 ff., 54 ff.), and since these probability relationships always involve the possibility of alternative consequences, a given stimulus invariably gives rise to several alternative hypothetical meanings. One consequent may, of course, be so much more probable than any other that the listener, though aware of the possibility of less likely consequences, is really set and ready only for the most probable. In such a case hypothetical meaning is without ambiguity. In other cases several consequents may be almost equally probable, and, since the listener is in doubt as to which alternative will actually materialize, meaning is ambiguous, though not necessarily less forceful and marked (see pp. 51 ff.).⁴⁶

Though the consequent which is actually forthcoming must be possible within the style, it may or may not be one of those which was most probable. Or it may arrive only after a delay or a deceptive diversion through alternative consequences. But whether our expectations are confirmed or not, a new stage of meaning is reached when the consequent becomes actualized as a concrete musical event.

"Evident meanings" are those which are attributed to the antecedent gesture when the consequent becomes a physico-psychic fact and when the relationship between the antecedent and consequent is perceived. Since the consequent of a stimulus itself becomes a stimulus with consequents, evident meaning also includes the later stages of musical development which are presumed to be the products of a chain of causality. Thus in the following sequence, where a stimulus (*S*) leads to a consequent (*C*), which is also a stimulus that indicates and is actualized in further consequents,

$$S_1 \dots\dots C_1 S_2 \dots\dots C_2 S_3 \dots\dots \text{etc.}$$

evident meaning arises not only out of the relationship between S_1 and C_1 but also out of the relationships between S_1 and all subsequent consequences, in so far as these are considered to issue from S_1 . It is also important to realize that the motion S_1, \dots, C_1 may itself become a gesture that gives rise to envisaged and actual consequents and hence becomes a term or gesture on another level of triadic relationships. In other words, both evident and hypothetical meanings come into being and exist on several architectonic levels.

Evident meaning is colored and conditioned by hypothetical meaning. For the actual relationship between the gesture and its consequent is always considered in the light of the expected relationship. In a sense the listener even revises his opinion of the hypothetical meaning when the stimulus does not move to the expected consequent.

"Determinate meanings" are those meanings which arise out of the relationships existing between hypothetical meaning, evident meaning, and the later stages of the musical development. In other words, determinate meaning arises only after the experience of the work is timeless in memory, only when all the meanings which the stimulus has had in the particular experience are realized and their relationships to one another comprehended as fully as possible.

THE OBJECTIFICATION OF MEANING

A distinction must be drawn between the understanding of musical meaning which involves the awareness of the tendencies, resistances, tensions, and fulfillments embodied in a work and the self-conscious objectification of that meaning in the mind of the individual listener. The former may be said to involve a meaningful experience, the latter involves knowing what that meaning is, considering it as an objective thing in consciousness.

The operation of intelligence in listening to music need never become self-conscious. We are continually behaving in an intelligent way, comprehending meanings and acting upon our perceptions, cognitions, and evaluations without ever making the meanings themselves the objects of our scrutiny—without ever becoming self-conscious about what experience means. What Bertrand Russell says

about understanding language also applies to the understanding of music: "Understanding language is . . . like understanding cricket: it is a matter of habits acquired in oneself and rightly presumed in others."⁴⁷

Meanings become objectified only under conditions of self-consciousness and when reflection takes place. "One attains self-consciousness only as he takes, or finds himself stimulated to take, the attitude of the other."⁴⁸ Though training may make for a generally self-conscious attitude, one is stimulated to take the attitude of the other when the normal habits of response are disturbed in some way; when one is driven to ask one's self: What does this mean, what is the intention of this passage? Reflection is likewise brought into play where some tendency is delayed, some pattern of habitual behavior disturbed. So long as behavior is automatic and habitual there is no urge for it to become self-conscious, though it may become so. If meaning is to become objectified at all, it will as a rule become so when difficulties are encountered that make normal, automatic behavior impossible. In other words, given a mind disposed toward objectification, meaning will become the focus of attention, an object of conscious consideration, when a tendency or habit reaction is delayed or inhibited.

MEANING AND AFFECT

It thus appears that the same processes which were said to give rise to affect are now said to give rise to the objectification of embodied meaning.

But this is a dilemma only so long as the traditional dichotomy between reason and emotion and the parent polarity between mind and body are adopted. Once it is recognized that affective experience is just as dependent upon intelligent cognition as conscious intellection, that both involve perception, taking account of, envisaging, and so forth, then thinking and feeling need not be viewed as polar opposites but as different manifestations of a single psychological process.

There is no diametric opposition, no inseparable gulf, between the affective and the intellectual responses made to music. Though they are psychologically differentiated as responses, both depend

upon the same perceptive processes, the same stylistic habits, the same modes of mental organization; and the same musical processes give rise to and shape both types of experience. Seen in this light, the formalist's conception of musical experience and the expressionist's conception of it appear as complementary rather than contradictory positions. They are considering not different processes but different ways of experiencing the same process.

Whether a piece of music gives rise to affective experience or to intellectual experience depends upon the disposition and training of the listener. To some minds the disembodied feeling of affective experience is uncanny and unpleasant and a process of rationalization is undertaken in which the musical processes are objectified as conscious meaning. Belief also probably plays an important role in determining the character of the response. Those who have been taught to believe that musical experience is primarily emotional and who are therefore disposed to respond affectively will probably do so. Those listeners who have learned to understand music in technical terms will tend to make musical processes an object of conscious consideration. This probably accounts for the fact that most trained critics and aestheticians favor the formalist position. Thus while the trained musician consciously waits for the expected resolution of a dominant seventh chord the untrained, but practiced, listener feels the delay as affect.

MUSIC AND COMMUNICATION

Meanings and affects may, however, arise without communication taking place. Individual *A* observes another individual *B* wink and interprets the wink as a friendly gesture. It has meaning for *A* who observes it. But if the wink was not intentional—if, for instance, *B* simply has a nervous tic—then no communication has taken place, for to *B* the act had no meaning. Communication, as Mead has pointed out, takes place only where the gesture made has the same meaning for the individual who makes it that it has for the individual who responds to it.⁴⁹

It is this internalization of gestures, what Mead calls "taking the attitude of the other"⁵⁰ (the audience), which enables the creative artist, the composer, to communicate with listeners. It is because the

composer is also a listener that he is able to control his inspiration with reference to the listener.⁵¹ For instance, the composer knows how the listener will respond to a deceptive cadence and controls the later stages of the composition with reference to that supposed response. The performer too is continually "taking the attitude of the other"—of the listener. As Leopold Mozart puts it, the performer "must play everything in such a way that he will himself be moved by it."⁵²

It is precisely because he is continually taking the attitude of the listener that the composer becomes aware and conscious of his own self, his ego, in the process of creation. In this process of differentiation between himself as composer and himself as audience, the composer becomes self-conscious and objective.⁵³

But though the listener participates in the musical process, assuming the role which the composer envisaged for him, and though he must, in some sense, create his own experience, yet he need not take the attitude of the composer in order to do so. He need not ask: How will someone else respond to this stimulus? Nor is he obliged to objectify his own responses, to ask, How am I responding? Unlike the composer, the listener may and frequently does "lose himself in the music"; and, in following and responding to the sound gestures made by the composer, the listener may become oblivious of his own ego, which has literally become one with that of the music.

We must, then, be wary of easy and high-sounding statements to the effect that "we cannot understand a work of art without, to a certain degree, repeating and reconstructing the creative process by which it has come into being."⁵⁴ Certainly the listener must respond to the work of art as the artist intended, and the listener's experience of the work must be similar to that which the composer envisaged for him. But this is a different thing from experiencing the "creative process which brought it into being."

However, the listener may take the attitude of the composer. He may be self-conscious in the act of listening. Those trained in music, and perhaps those trained in the other arts as well, tend, because of the critical attitudes which they have developed in connection with their own artistic efforts, to become self-conscious and objective in

all their aesthetic experiences. And it is no doubt partly for this reason that, as noted above, trained musicians tend to objectify meaning, to consider it as an object of conscious cognition (see also p. 70 n. 24).

Finally, and perhaps most important of all, this analysis of communication emphasizes the absolute necessity of a common universe of discourse in art. For without a set of gestures common to the social group, and without common habit responses to those gestures, no communication whatsoever would be possible. Communication depends upon, presupposes, and arises out of the universe of discourse which in the aesthetics of music is called style.

II

Expectation and Learning

In the preceding chapter the inhibition of a tendency to respond or, on the conscious level, the frustration of expectation was found to be the basis of the affective and the intellectual aesthetic response to music. If this hypothesis is correct, then an analysis of the process of expectation is clearly a prerequisite for the understanding of how musical meaning, whether affective or aesthetic, arises in any particular instance. Such an analysis is also necessary if the evidence used in support of the hypothesis, evidence which relates specific musical processes to stipulations of affectivity and aesthetic pleasure, is to be interpreted in a meaningful way.

A general distinction must be drawn at the outset between those expectations that arise out of the nature of human mental processes—the modes in which the mind perceives, groups, and organizes the data presented by the senses—and those expectations that are based upon learning in the broadest sense of the term. In the actual perception of music there is, of course, an intimate and subtle interaction between the two types of expectation.

Paradoxical though it may seem, the expectations based upon learning are, in a sense, prior to the natural modes of thought. For we perceive and think in terms of a specific musical language just as we think in terms of a specific vocabulary and grammar; and the possibilities presented to us by a particular musical vocabulary and grammar condition the operation of our mental processes and hence of the expectations which are entertained on the basis of

those processes. The mind, for example, expects structural gaps to be filled; but what constitutes such a gap depends upon what constitutes completeness within a particular musical style system. Musical language, like verbal language, is heuristic in the sense "that its forms predetermine for us certain modes of observation and interpretation."¹ Thus the expectations which result from the nature of human mental processes are always conditioned by the possibilities and probabilities inherent in the materials and their organization as presented in a particular musical style.

In this chapter the relationship between expectation and learning will be examined. The manner in which the mind groups and organizes the data presented to it by the senses, the structure of the thinking process as conditioned by the learned response sequences, and the manner in which this process gives rise to expectation will be the subject of chapters iii, iv, and v.

The study of expectation which follows makes no pretense to completeness: first, because a complete and systematic study of the process of expectation would be a formidable task, requiring a separate monograph of its own;² second, because a detailed account of expectation would have to be preceded by a great deal of experimental work in the field of pattern and figure perception in music; and third, because such a study would entail a detailed description and sensitive appreciation of the stylistic context within which the process of expectation was being studied.

This necessity for stylistic understanding has determined the choice of examples in the following chapters. In order not to further complicate the already difficult and delicate task of discussing expectation, no attempt is made in this and the following three chapters to prove that the processes examined do, in fact, have affective aesthetic meaning; that is, no commentaries from outside sources, from composers, critics, theorists, and the like, as to the affective aesthetic nature of the various examples are introduced. Since the general reader is more likely to have developed sensitive habit responses to the music of Western Europe of the past three hundred years than to any other part of the literature of music, the examples in these chapters have been chosen from the music of this period. In chapters vi and vii, where comments on the examples by com-

posers, performers, theorists, and critics are introduced in evidence, both the examples and the commentaries have been taken from a wide variety of cultures, styles, and epochs.

Style: Formal Considerations

Musical styles are more or less complex systems of sound relationships understood and used in common by a group of individuals. The relationships obtaining within such a style system are such that: (a) only some sounds or "unitary sound combinations" are possible; (b) those sounds possible within the system may be plurisituational within defined limits; (c) the sounds possible within the system can be combined only in certain ways to form compound terms; (d) the conditions stated in (a), (b), and (c) are subject to the probability relationships obtaining within the system;³ (e) the probability relationships prevailing within the system are a function of context within a particular work as well as within the style system generally. The occurrence of any sound or group of sounds, simultaneously or in sequence, will be more or less probable depending upon the structure of the system and the context in which the sounds occur.

SOUND TERMS AND SOUND STIMULI

A sound or group of sounds (whether simultaneous, successive, or both) that indicate, imply, or lead the listener to expect a more or less probable consequent event are a musical gesture or "sound term" within a particular style system. The actual physical stimulus which is the necessary but not sufficient condition for the sound term will be called the "sound stimulus." The same sound stimulus may give rise to different sound terms in different style systems or within one and the same system. This is analogous to the fact that the same word (sound stimulus) may have different meanings (may become different sound terms, implying different consequences) in different languages or within one and the same language. The word "gauche," for example, has different, though related, meanings in English and French, while words such as "cross," "ground," or "interest" have different meanings within one and the