

---

LAWRENCE KRAMER

## THE MYSTERIES OF ANIMATION: HISTORY, ANALYSIS AND MUSICAL SUBJECTIVITY

---

Leo Tolstoy tried very hard not to like music, but he could not help liking Chopin.\* 'While I listened', he said, 'I became as one with Chopin; I felt as if I had composed the piece myself' (Marek and Gordon-Smith 1978, p. 246). This type of statement is not unusual, so it is easy to overlook how remarkable it actually is. Tolstoy likes Chopin because Chopin gives him a new identity that is both thoroughly other and fully his, Tolstoy's, own: as if at one with Chopin, no longer himself, he feels as if he, himself, had composed the piece. The music goes right to the core of the listener's subjectivity, and it does so regardless of its own subjective content, which Tolstoy does not specify, as he hardly could, since he does not even bother to specify the piece. The relationship between Tolstoy and Chopin cannot be independent of the latter as the exemplar of a certain style or sound, but it arises, not 'from' that 'Chopin' as a source, but in the dynamic interaction between the music – here understood as the surrogate for its composer, in other contexts for its performer – and the subject as listener.

What are the wider implications of Tolstoy's remark? Most obviously, it points to music as a site of subjective mobility or negotiation, and in so doing raises the general question of the relationship between music and subjectivity. In its indifference to 'content', it locates that question not in the field of expression but in that of action, dialogue, cultural and psychological work. The remark is obviously history- and culture-bound, but to the extent that people today still tune their sense of self to music – a very large extent, if the ongoing struggles between internet software and the music industry is any sign – the history and culture are still binding a hundred or more years after Tolstoy, as they were a hundred or more years before. This stretch of history, roughly defined, is the one that opens the possibility that music may have a formative, as opposed to a merely practical

\* A shorter version of this essay was presented as the keynote address at 'Music, Subjectivity and Analysis', a conference sponsored by the Society for Music Analysis at Goldsmiths College, London on 18 November, 2000. About six paragraphs of the essay are adapted from the English text of an article published in German, 'Ein Phantasiestück zur Jahrtausendwende', trans. Lydia Jeschke, *Archiv für Musikwissenschaft*, 57 (2000), pp. 101–7, and are used here by permission.

or emotive, impact on subjectivity. A good deal of recent musicological and music-analytical thinking has gone into investigating that possibility, with special emphasis on feelings, bodily experience, cultural tropes and ideology. What follows is an attempt to go one step further by thinking about the issue in the most general form permitted by the cultural-historical location of western musics since the mid-eighteenth century. What, exactly, is formatively at stake for the subject as listener? How does understanding that stake affect our understanding of musical meaning and musical form? And what, if anything, do these vicissitudes of musical subjectivity tell us about the general relations of subjectivity in culture?

## I

For help in framing answers, we can begin with a pair of historically salient ways of framing the question that bypass the familiar emphasis on what music 'expresses' to focus on what it does. These instances are necessarily somewhat arbitrary, but they are representative, or at least symptomatic. During the course of this article, I will paste them together with a few others to form a kind of cut-out or collage on the theme of musical subjectivity in lieu of a full-dress 'theory'. My examples, I should add, are drawn from outside the arena of musical professionalism, partly to uphold the validity of 'amateur' discourse and partly to raise the question of just what professionalised, specifically analytical, discourse has to do with the experience of the subject as listener.

In 1851 Jakob Grimm, fairy tale collector and lexicographer extraordinaire, gave a lecture to the Prussian Academy of Sciences on the origin of language. At several points he put an interesting new spin on the conventional idea that language separates human beings from the animals. Humans, he says, are unique in not only emitting individualised sounds but also organising and developing them: 'human language seems articulated to us, which coincides with the Homeric epithet for *man* – *hoi meropes* ... from *meiromai* ... "those who divide their voice"' (Willson 1982, p. 266). Humans, moreover, are unique in being able to unite sound with thought. 'Man, *Mensch*, is called that because he [both] thinks and speaks. ... Animals do not speak because they do not think, and therefore are called the unspeaking, Old Norse *omaelandi* ... and the unreasoning, *bruta, muta bestiae* ... [T]he Greek *alogos* expresses both unthinking and unspeaking. The child begins to speak when it starts to think, and his speech grows as his thinking grows, both of them not additively but multiplicatively' (p. 274). Grimm's argument posits that language comprises the truth of 'man' twice over: it is the means by which human subjects become who they are, and it reveals itself to be so by the meanings sedimented in its own history.

Music, which is my topic, is not Grimm's, but he does pause to consider it, as virtually any German thinker of the mid-nineteenth century would do. Music, he says, 'stands opposite to articulated language' but may be united with it in song. Here again the human/animal difference comes into play. Perhaps echoing Jean-Jacques Rousseau's pithy 'Birds whistle; man alone sings' (Rousseau 1990, p. 287), Grimm contrasts the 'inborn, immutable skill' of singing birds with the 'feelings and imagination of humans, different everywhere', from which music issues. Human feelings and imagination, however, are ultimately grounded in language, and therefore music must be as well. Grimm thus traces a genealogy: song derives from measured speech, and the rest of music from song 'by intensified abstraction', on the basis of which music 'after relinquishing words soars winged to such heights that no thought can follow it surely'. From this it follows that 'Music could much sooner be called a sublimation of language than language a precipitate of music' (Willson 1982, p. 290).

The phrasing of this conclusion again takes us back to Rousseau, who thought just the opposite. In his *Essay on the Origin of Languages*, probably written in the 1750s and posthumously published in 1781, Rousseau claims that language originated in the spontaneous cry of passion, and that the first language was one in which speech and song, music and utterance, were identical, a kind of stylised elaboration of the cry. Articulated language is a precipitate, in fact a degenerate form, of its musicalised primal self. 'A language that has only articulation and utterance [*voix*] is . . . in possession of only half its resources: true, it conveys ideas; but to convey sentiments and images it still needs rhythms and sonorities, that is to say a melody' (Rousseau 1990, p. 277). Rousseau goes on to argue that modern music is also degenerate insofar as it sacrifices melody to harmony, but his essay also talks about melody without apparent reference to this narrative of decline: 'by imitating the accents of languages . . . [melody] not only imitates, it speaks; and its language, though inarticulate, is lively, ardent, passionate, and a hundred times more vigorous than speech itself' (p. 282). Even speech can regain some of its primal power when its performative rather than semantic aspect is foremost, which is to say, when it recovers some of its relationship to melody. Discourse still has 'accents to which one cannot close one's ear and which by way of it penetrate to the very depths of the heart' (p. 243). But speech is no match for music, which can install an unlimited variety of sentiments directly on the heart or soul (pp. 287–8).

This musical bias slips quietly through a loophole in Rousseau's genetic logic: although speech and song were originally one, speech is no longer intoned, but songs are still sung. Melody is far more capable than articulate utterance of surviving separation from the primal language with a remnant of its expressive power intact, and insofar as it does, it reunites the listener to the

very core of human subjectivity. Where Grimm places music at an ever-widening remove from its subjective origin, which is in any case secondary, Rousseau, almost despite himself, finds music in the closest available proximity to that origin. Where for Grimm music proceeds from language towards the transcendent, for Rousseau music recedes from language – Grimm's 'articulate' language – towards the immanent.<sup>1</sup>

I dwell on this *querelle* or *Streit* between Grimm and Rousseau not to update and uphold one position or another, but to suggest the historical breadth of a core question that can be extracted from their richly figurative accounts and disengaged from their mythico-genetic narratives. What impact does music have on a subject formed or framed by language? Does it bring the subject into contact with an extralinguistic identity replete with special satisfactions, as if it could lift the 'bar' that Jacques Lacan insisted separated all subjects-in-language from themselves?<sup>2</sup> Or does music, regardless of its origins in feeling and imagination, carry the subject out of itself into a realm of indiscernables? Or does it do something else for which these alternatives have served, historically, as tropes? More exactly, when and how does music 'do' these things? How are the two tendencies related beyond simple antithesis? And how – since this question more even than the narrative mode separates the majority of scholars today from figures like Grimm and Rousseau – how do these processes interact with the specific historical character of both subjectivity and music?

## II

The answer to these questions, which of course is not 'the' answer but a model, a heuristic, a set of tropes that hope to be practicable, depends on an understanding of subjectivity as both irreducibly dynamic and irreducibly plural: not just as socially embedded, but as simultaneously a product, medium and agent of sociocultural practice. I had this requirement in mind when I proposed a model of musical subjectivity as interlocution in *Classical Music and Postmodern Knowledge* (Kramer 1995, pp. 19–25), a model I now propose to recall, extend and somewhat revise.

This model rests on the postmodernist idea that the basic work of culture is to construct subject positions, contingent frames of reference within which certain forms of action, desire, speech and understanding become possible. The subject is not a private monad, a nugget of being that extends itself outwards to others, though never wholly so; it is a disposition to incessant and multiple relationship that assumes concrete form in the positions it can occupy, fantasise, or aspire to. The immediate effect of culture is to install a repertoire of definite identities within the perceived individuality of the person. This is typically done so that the locally formed identity seems to exemplify a universal. The work of subject-formation proceeds in and through the

placement of persons within discrete zones of vocational, cultural, social and linguistic practices, each of which continually engages with the others in processes of exchange, negotiation and symbolic substitution.

Music meant to be listened to with a degree of focused attention addresses itself to an actual or virtual subject position that the listening subject ventures to fill. The subjectivity of the listener qua listener arises in a process of dialogue in which music acts as the ideal or authoritative subject in whose place I, the listener, come to be, whose subjective character I reproduce as my own. Slavoj Žižek, following Lacan in a tradition that leads back to Hegel, calls this ideal/authoritative subject the 'big Other'.<sup>3</sup> Tolstoy simply called it 'Chopin'. As I use the concept, departing somewhat from the ahistorical psychoanalytic framework of Lacan and Žižek, the big Other is constitutively incomplete: it is a cipher that requires historical specification before it can be effective in either action or interpretation. At the same time, the big Other typically becomes effective precisely as a cipher: that is, it works primarily by being embodied in representation, and in particular by being personified, for example by Chopin, as the term 'big Other' suggests.

This personification needs to be taken seriously. The alternative Lacanian name for the big Other is the symbolic order, which refers to the system of law and language within which all subjects, qua subjects, must be enrolled (and which, psychoanalytically speaking, structures the unconscious). I take it as constitutive that the symbolic order becomes efficacious only when its personification allows it to address human subjects within specific social rituals and dramas, with pleasure and prestige to be won or lost. Music in the modern era acts as an immediate, palpable form of the subjectivity negotiated in these scenarios. This is equally the case with instrumental music, which is increasingly identified as music's primary form, and of vocal music, which is felt to propel its language towards the alternative destinations proposed by Grimm and Rousseau. The primary action of music in this era is not to express subjectivity, no matter how expressive of feeling or 'musical personality' some of it may be. Its primary action is to invite subjectivity: to address itself to a subject position and by that means to help produce, embody and reward the position addressed.

Apart from its specific character, every instance of this process re-enacts the general structure of formative encounter between the subject and the big Other. In so doing, it also re-enacts the recognition that the subject is inherently social, incoherent in itself alone. But music also removes much of the trauma from this potentially alienating recognition, rendering it both pleasurable and affirmative. At the same time, music removes much of the impersonality of the big Other, replacing the Other's impassivity – also a potential source of trauma – with sonorous warmth. The result may equally well be to dazzle the subject with the charisma of its ideal or to enhance its own

capacities for insight and self-development. The 'I' of this structure may either be fixed rigidly by the subject-position offered or emerge as a compromise between that position and the counter-position from which I, as a historical subject, actually accept the offer. The subject position offered or occupied may not only represent the big Other but also seek to resist or evade it. Either way, the subject position is the site to which music is addressed as something meaningful and the site from which the meaning of the music is enunciated.<sup>4</sup>

The historical appearance of these processes might roughly be given a double date of origin, one around the close of the sixteenth and the other around the close of the eighteenth century, both historical moments that consolidate a gradually developing identification of subjectivity with a sense of inwardness. The two 'waves' of interiorisation are quite different from each other, but each recasts an older construction of subjectivity in the same direction. Each is the product of an era perceived by those who lived in it as modern and therefore as marked by a self-conscious difference from the past. In either era, the inward turn is not an abstract *fait accompli*, but the product of continual work that is not easy to achieve and must continually be maintained and reworked. Music quickly comes to the fore as a means of forming and cultivating inwardness because of the seemingly direct relationship between music and emotion, and again between music and the interior of the body that hears, plays and responds to music. One might even loosely speculate that the pre-eminent musical forms during each wave of interiorisation reflect differences in the historical modes of subject formation. Opera and monody suggest the inwardness of the Renaissance, which was often enunciated in theatrical terms. Instrumental music suggests the post-Enlightenment conception of the subject as a mode of depth, an inner space filled with recesses, layers and unfathomed reaches.

To stay with the modern era: in the nineteenth century music becomes a favoured crucible for constructing the subject in depth. Listening becomes a means of sounding out the otherwise inaccessible interior of the self: a kind of sonar. Hegel, among others, identifies this interior resonance with the resonating effects of tone as such within the body cavity and with the position of sound as the most 'intellectual' of the senses, that is, the sense least proximate to material reality.<sup>5</sup> One reason for these identifications is an alliance between the way the subject was conceived and the era's heightened emphasis on the capacity of music to bypass language. Subjective depth was (and is) generally identified with an unsymbolisable uniqueness that stands in excess over anything that the subject can say or that can be said about it. Music becomes the model of this depth because it can embody the required excess in the spheres of both pleasure and knowledge. On the one hand, the pleasures of music are extreme, hard to govern, and hard to describe. On the other, the inability of music to make truth-claims in the manner of language can be taken,

and historically was taken, to render musical meaning elusive and inarticulate.

As music during this period moved from courts of patronage to the marketplace, bourgeois home and concert hall, this double excess helped make it the vehicle of intense social and quasi-sexual energies, the sharing of which carried the project of subjectivity forward in the daily life of all those with economic access to musical production – a group soon to expand widely with the development of mass media. Shuttling between the extralinguistic subject positions assigned it by Rousseau and Grimm, oriented to primary emotion on the one hand and ineffable intuition on the other, music assumes a new defining character. It becomes a phenomenon of intermediacy, of liminality, through which the speaking subject becomes someone else, a new, unsuspected self. Music enables emotion to forge a connection with hidden truth.

Oscar Wilde described the results by putting a *fin-de-siècle* construction on Tolstoy's confusion of identities: 'After playing Chopin, I feel as if I had been weeping over sins that I had never committed, and mourning over tragedies that were not my own'. This transmigration of feelings (especially the more poignant feelings) proves to exemplify the general power of music to implant subjective states in the listener that are paradoxically both native and alien, impossible either to own or disown: '[Music] creates for one a past of which one has been ignorant, and fills one with a sense of sorrows that have been hidden from one's tears'. The argument concludes with a joke whose importance characteristically lies in being earnest: 'I can fancy a man who had led a perfectly commonplace life, hearing by chance some curious piece of music, and suddenly discovering that his soul, without his being conscious of it, had passed through terrible experiences, and known fearful joys, or wild romantic loves, or great renunciations' (Wilde 1982, p. 343).<sup>6</sup> The subject as listener discovers his own depths at the crossroads of Platonic recollection and Freudian forgetting, in the form of sublime effects from unknown causes. It is worth mentioning in passing that the association of music as a medium of subjective fluidity and music as a means of overcoming the horror of the commonplace has been basic to its mass-entertainment value from the nineteenth-century virtuoso concert to today's proliferation of MP3 files.

### III

All the thinkers discussed so far conceive of the dynamics of musical subjectivity in universal terms. Grimm, who is unusual in confining subjectivity within the supposedly coextensive limits of language and thought, posits music as a breaching of those limits. Tolstoy and Rousseau regard the capacity of musical subjectivity to become particularised as a social and historical catastrophe; both identify melody as the universal element in music and deplore its contamination by the purely contingent, excessively specific

interference of harmony. Hegel says something quite similar when he claims that music can 'correspond to the free subjective self-sufficiency it ought to express' only when melody is singable, coherent, and not subordinated to 'employment of the full resources of harmony' and the 'boldness' of the resulting 'struggle' within and against those resources (Hegel 1838, vol. 3, p. 185).<sup>7</sup> The focus of Rousseau, Hegel and Tolstoy on melody is historically important; melody has often been taken as the expressive *sine qua non* of western music for its capacity to encapsulate feeling within a small closed form. (The contrary view, argued among others by Arnold Schoenberg [Schoenberg 1975, p. 165], that melody is only significant in the context of an enveloping total conception, expressive of a germinal idea, seems more 'right' and more progressive, but still seems powerless against the appeal of a good tune.) For present purposes, though, the valorising of melody is less significant in itself than as a means of upholding the ideal of a certain universal subjectivity as an ideal of musical aesthetics.

In meshing those ideals, our assorted thinkers all serve the interests of the big Other, whose claims are always and by definition universal. As their own subject positions dictate, they side-step the obvious complication that the universal can never enunciate itself directly as such. It always requires the mediation of particulars that can never wholly efface their social or historical contingency no matter how unmarked or unremarked it may be in the given instance. For better or worse, this requirement can be thought of as the hinge that opens the space of negotiation between the big Other and the subjects addressed by it. The Other identifies the wholehearted embrace of a certain particular with admission to the universal position that consolidates and validates the subject. But since the subject can respond to the Other only from a historically contingent position, the only real difference between a full and a partial embrace is the difference between a feeling or fantasy of being transfixed by the particular and the feeling or fantasy of asserting one's own prerogatives. The subject's turn to heed the Other's 'voice' is in part an indirection, a 'turn' in the sense of a riff, 'bit' or 'number', or in the sense of creative deviation, a trope (etymologically a turn). The subject heeds, but in so doing partly transforms what is heeded. The subject position is in every case a modification of the universalising position offered by the big Other. The subject must modify the Other as much to heed as to negotiate with it, and the character of the Other can be discerned or constructed only by inference from the effects of this modification.

Tolstoy can furnish an example. Music, he says, can unite otherwise estranged people 'as by an electric flash' in a common feeling; it is the art that achieves universality 'oftenest of all' (Richter 1998, p. 476). Nonetheless, aside from 'marches and dances by various composers . . . one can indicate very few works in this class'. Most modern music seeks to make its melodies – poor to

begin with – more attractive by larding them ‘with harmonic, rhythmic, and orchestral complications’ that only make them ‘more exclusive’, more remote from common experience. The exceptions consist only of ‘Bach’s famous violin aria, Chopin’s nocturne in E flat major, and perhaps a dozen bits (not whole pieces, but parts) selected from the works of Haydn, Mozart, Schubert, Beethoven, and Chopin’ (p. 478). The Chopin Nocturne (presumably the popular piece from Op. 9, not its lesser-known cousin from Op. 55) divides its texture very clearly between left-hand accompaniment and right-hand melody, both of which have a high degree of continuity and a marked simplicity of outline. On these grounds the mood of the piece – call it restrained lyricism, sentiment without sentimentality – should be open to any and all listeners. This openness is not only part of Tolstoy’s enjoyment, but also what allows him to enjoy; in listening, he feels himself potentially at one with fellow listeners, even those remote from the cultural milieu in which playing Chopin is a normal and normative activity.

Yet the piece is certainly not free of harmonic and rhythmic complications. On the contrary, the harmony is constantly teasing, elusive if not quite enigmatic. The second bar seems to go to the submediant major, which, however, quickly turns out to be a rather remote applied dominant (see Ex. 1). The third bar begins with another false appearance, a deceptive cadence to the actual submediant. Interpolated chords add subtlety to these progressions, which defer the appearance of the first tonic-seeking dominant chord until the second beat of the fourth bar, just in time to close the melodic period. One

Ex. 1 Chopin, Nocturne in E $\flat$ , opening

Andante  
mp  
espress. dolce

simile

V? V<sup>7</sup>/ii ii

V — 7 V<sup>6</sup>/vi vi

V<sup>7</sup> I

could surmise that this harmonisation of the always-lucid melody causes the piece to be addressed, not just to anyone, but to someone refined enough to hear the harmonic subtlety in the melodic simplicity, the nuance of implication within the clarity of sentiment. Similar observations might be made of the rhythmic displacements produced by Chopin's restatements of the initial melody with fioriture – modest fioriture certainly, but fioriture nonetheless. Tolstoy can therefore be said to have construed an exclusionary – more charitably a selective – act of expression as an inclusive one.

But he is not merely 'wrong' to do so. The sectional form of the nocturne is A A' B A' B A' C, followed by a brief cadenza and codetta. The A sections consist of the melodic period just described; the B sections are not contrastive episodes but bridge passages stringing together reharmonised variants of the opening phrase of A. The main 'action' prior to the C section, the action on which the C section forms a reflection or reminiscence, is thus the series of four melodically varied statements of the A section, always to the same tricky harmonies, even the same chords. The recurrence of the harmonies clarifies and naturalises them; the resulting continuity is reinforced at the rhythmic level by the consistency of the accompaniment that sounds the harmonies, an unbroken series of quaver triplets that extends right through the C section. Setting aside certain enigmatic features of the cadenza and codetta, the piece might be said to dissolve its mysteries as it proceeds, to become more confiding, more generous in its address. All Tolstoy has done is modify the scope of the process to exclude no-one, and thus to suggest that the emotional refinement projected by the music can be found in everyone.

#### IV

The process of modification may shed some further light on music's special power to embody the big Other. This process is precisely what is lacking in the similar, but not identical, process of ideological 'interpellation' as theorised by Louis Althusser (Žižek 1994, pp. 100–40). In this suggestive and influential formulation, ideology is that which forms subjects in culture by causing the citizen-subject to recognise himself in the 'hail' of an authoritative other, paradigmatically turning to heed the other's voice. As Judith Butler has argued, Althusser's figure of voice is not merely incidental; his underlying model of interlocution is in fact one of the subject's compliant response to an authoritative voice, ultimately (as his other examples indicate) the voice of God. This kind of compliance, Butler observes, rarely occurs in practice except when backed by the full power of the state (Butler 1997, p. 32). For her, this requires rethinking the concept to allow for more negotiation and resistance on the part of the subject addressed; for present purposes, it points to the ability of another sonority, music's sonority, to become an abstracted or purified form, a

more suasive than coercive form, of such an authoritative voice, and at the same time, contrariwise, to absorb less than perfectly compliant responses to its call as if they were what was in request all along.

This process, however, is constitutively unstable. At no point does subjectivity settle in either the call or the respondent; when it seems to, the subjective drama threatens to subside into an empty performance, a lifeless routine. The subject is never fully comprehended in a single call. The lived experience of subjectivity continually slips out of reach; unless it is renewed by fresh calls, the repetition of its behavioural trappings will gradually fritter it away. The call itself can afford greater fixity – an anthem, a ritual language, fixed sets of tropes – but its repetitions always run the risk of pro forma adherence coupled with ironic withdrawal, which may run the gamut from simple insincerity to ironic deformation to carnivalesque debasement. The call, too, is thus in constant search of renewal. For the subject as listener, music embodies this drama of subjective renewal and exhaustion with unique power and immediacy, which may be why it is so often an instrument of interpellation in social-ideological practice. The aesthetic guidelines issued by Rousseau, Hegel and Tolstoy are absurdly narrow, but the phenomenon they point to is broad and deep. Music is not only uniquely capable of bringing subject positions ‘to life’, but also of demonstrating that any subject position is vulnerable to appearing as a meaningless routine, a robotic mechanism that must continually be made to appear lifelike again. Music thus becomes an arena for enacting a key cultural drama, the bridging of the gap between subjectivity as construction and subjectivity as lived experience, without which culture itself cannot function except by sheer force.

This drama, however, is not an all-or-nothing zero-sum game, though Hegel, Tolstoy and others tend to present it as one. Between the extremes of complete identification with a piece of music or Proustian ‘little phrase’ and the brick wall of subjective vacuity there lies a vast array of mixed cases that surely make up the majority of musical experiences. Taking the extremes as a defining framework, what kind of subjectivity do these experiences add up to? What is the general mode of existence of modern musical subjectivity?

## V

Hegel offers some help with this question in a phrase that will recur below, a description of music considered apart from any subjective content as an ‘apparently disembodied sequence of sounds’ (‘scheinbar wesenlose Ergehen in Tönen’; H p. 213, K p. 954. ‘Wesenlos’ suggests both insubstantiality and incorporeality). How does such a sequence manage to acquire a virtual subjectivity? Answer: very strangely. The world is full of virtual subjects, the products of past and present technologies, from fictional characters in drama

and film to stuffed animals, puppets and dolls, to spectral magic-lantern projections, animated cartoons and computer-generated virtual creatures, but all these replicas have one thing that music does not: a visually discrete body. The grammar of embodiment allows us to identify these mechanical or immaterial bodies 'as' subjects, from Hamlet to Mickey Mouse. But although music is conveyed through bodies, and realised within the body of the listener, these bodies cannot be identified 'as' the musical subject, which has no body of its own and is, therefore, nobody.

For Hegel, music brings its subjective content to life by literally borrowing the listener's body to compensate for its own lack of one. It operates by expanding and deepening the elemental process by which 'tone as such penetrates the self, seizes it in its uttermost being, and sets . . . the ego in motion' ('so dringt der Ton . . . in das Selbst ein, fasst dasselbe seinem einfachsten Dasein nach, und setzt das ich . . . in Bewegung'; H p. 151, K p. 908). The immediate mark of this penetration and animation is physical, the desire to beat time, sing along, or dance (H p. 149, K p. 906). The (literally) more resonant mark is the subject's suffusion by the music's content, the rich array of feelings as expressed in the continuous exfoliation of musical tones (H p. 151, K p. 908). Music makes these feelings 'resound' ('wiederklingen') in the depths of 'ultimate subjective inwardness as such' ('die letzte subjective Innerlichkeit als solche'; H p. 129, K p. 891). 'Inwardness as such thus becomes the form in which [music] contrives to grasp [both seize and conceive] its content' ('die Innerlichkeit als solche ist daher der Form, in welcher [die Musik] ihren Inhalt zu fassen vermag'; H p. 143, K p. 902). But there is no sense in which the embodied content is, like the listener, a person; no sense, for example, in which Leo Tolstoy ever 'is' Chopin's Nocturne in E $\flat$ . It is the music in the person, not the person proper, that embodies – or fails to embody – subjective content.

Between the extremes of enchantment and obstruction, therefore, the subjectivity of music is the most uncanny among the replicas. Music is apparently disembodied sound, sound rendered independent of its sources and cut into form, no more. But it nonetheless feels, acts and sounds like subjectivity. Like a 'magnetic' or 'electrifying' force of personality, music can animate one subject after another, but it does so without any personality, without itself being or having a subject. The only person in the network, ventriloquising through the figure of the composer or performer, is the big Other, who is not a person at all. Like an animated cartoon, though of course with greater prestige, music carelessly defies the laws of embodiment; neither death nor gravity fazes it, its shape is unusually pliable, and, as W. H. Auden said, it 'can be made anywhere, is invisible, / And does not smell' ('In Praise of Limestone', Auden 1967, p. 240). It may be no accident that the first mass-entertainment celebrities were singers and piano virtuosos, or that animation was the first vehicle of fully synchronised sound in film history.<sup>8</sup>

It may be no accident either, that the mysteries of musical animation are most evident, and most potent, on the large middle ground of imperfect cases. These are the cases in which musical interlocution tangibly modifies the big Other in the course of heeding its call. As we have seen, this modification is more the rule than the exception; it is built into the interlocutory form of subjectivity in general. The process is defined less by how it goes aright than by how it goes awry.<sup>9</sup> There is nonetheless a powerful tendency in musical aesthetics to turn a deaf ear to this constructive imperfection beyond a certain point: a desire to separate the sense of animation by music from too much awareness of its strangeness and contingency. The stakes of this desire appear most clearly where it is thwarted, an impasse that Rousseau, Hegel and Tolstoy all worry about. Their worry represents a decidedly ‘amateur’ standpoint that has not endeared them to musicians, but that nonetheless speaks for a widespread listening practice.

The impasse arises when the Other’s call is uncommunicative, which happens when the music eludes or repels the listener. And that most often happens when the music is felt to overelaborate its devices of style, technique and form at the expense of its expressive content. For Rousseau and Tolstoy, as we have seen, the difficulty arises when melodic clarity is undercut by harmonic obfuscation; the long history of hostility to modernist ‘dissonance’ and ‘atonality’ takes essentially the same position. Such music becomes disembodied in a peculiar sense, objectified, mimicking rather than expressing life and feeling. And this happens, not because the music is expressively opaque – the listener may recognise perfectly well what the music is trying to express – but because the music interposes its own formal elaboration between the listener and that expression. The music loses transparency; one is forced to hear it in and for itself more than for its connection with passion, intuition or the like. The difference is similar to that between utterance that subordinates rhetoric and utterance subordinate to it, as, say, between Burns’s ‘O my luve is like a red, red rose’ and Swinburne’s ‘Love deep as the sea as a rose must wither, / As the rose-red seaweed that mocks the rose’.<sup>10</sup> The point here, it needs to be stressed, is not that form as such impedes a connection to content as such, but that a perceived excess of form degrades the ideal mutual adequation of form and content.

The most general formulation of this position by an important aesthete is Hegel’s: insofar as instrumental music realises its unique capacity to cut loose from the expression of textual meaning or other definite content, it is ‘empty and meaningless and, since it lacks the chief quality of all art, spiritual content and expression, is not yet properly considered as art’ (H p. 143, K p. 902). Although such ‘self-sufficient music’ can give full satisfaction to the cognoscenti, it can nonetheless ‘easily become something utterly devoid of thought and feeling, something needing [for its apprehension] no deep prior

awareness of culture [Bildung] or intellect [Gemüt]' (H p. 214, K p. 954). The result is not only a superficial pleasure but something worse. For Hegel, 'music's proper task is to frame a spiritual content . . . so that it comes to life in the sphere of subjective inwardness' ('[einen] Inhalt . . . so für die Geist [zu machen] . . . in den Weise, in welcher er in der Sphäre der subjektiven Innerlichkeit lebendig wird'; H p. 143, K p. 902). The expressive goal of music is not to give objective representation to a subjective content, but to realise that content as a virtual presence, the borrowed or transferred inwardness of a 'living subject', in the subjective inwardness of the listener (H p. 153, K p. 909, emphasis in original). Failure to do so can produce only bewilderment or uncertainty, or, worse, the disjecta membra of a subjectivity that cannot become animate: an apparently disembodied sequence of sounds.

Hegel's position earned him low marks for musical ignorance. Moreover, as intimated earlier, his distinction between vocal and instrumental music on the relevant point is untenable. Nonetheless, his diagnosis deserves to be taken seriously, not as an aesthetic prescription, but as a description of a certain limit to listening which is also the limit of musical subjectivity. This limit will be drawn differently at different times and places, in reference to different kinds and features of music, but it will nonetheless be drawn, and drawn along much the same lines. What Hegel placed at the border of vocal and instrumental music, and Rousseau and Tolstoy on the cusp of melody and harmony, the young Theodor Adorno situated between live and recorded music ('The Curves of the Needle', Levin *et al.* 1994, pp. 605–7) and the mature Louis Armstrong between traditional jazz and bebop (Walser 1999, pp. 153–4). It is reasonably easy to say what goes on the near side of this divide: it is a primary, 'natural' expressiveness through which the subject is reunited with the free, dynamic core of his or her own subjectivity. What goes on the far side is harder to specify. Perhaps it is best described as the mere simulation or simulacrum of subjectivity, something that may be perceived in numerous forms ranging from excessive rationality to manipulative insincerity to spiritless mechanism to historical regressiveness, among others. This simulation, in any case, is often felt to border on dissimulation; it deprives the subject as listener of the subjective truth and self-enhancement found in responding to the call of true musical expression. One way to describe the result is as a paralysis of the free oscillation between emotion and intuition, Rousseau and Grimm: the emotion appears as the artificial product of a set of musical devices that takes the place of the intuition instead of conveying it.

Worse yet, the musical simulation of subjectivity throws the musical expression of subjectivity into doubt. The logic here is that of the contaminating example, as it were the example as virus. Ostensibly, the bad example is a mere deviation from an ideal norm, but the principle of deviation turns out to be inherent in the norm as well. Hegel's self-sufficient music runs

foul of a fundamental contradiction between spiritual content and the independence of musical technique. But since there is no music without potentially independent technique, there is no assurance that the same contradiction is not latently present in all music. Music that seems to embody a spiritual content may only seem to do so; despite the appearance of a leap, it is logical to infer from a single failure that the failure is in some sense universal. Adorno follows a historical form of this logic in his critique of Stravinsky – the locus classicus for the problem of music and subjectivity – in *Philosophy of Modern Music*. In *Petrushka*, ‘Wherever the subjective element is encountered . . . it is evoked as something which in itself is already mechanical, hypostatized, and – to a certain extent – already lifeless’ (Adorno 1973, p. 144). This outcome is not merely a historical dead-end, but a symptom of a dead-endedness built into the historical process from the start: ‘All music – right down to the present day – has had to pay for the sound of collective responsibility [i.e. group identity] with an act of violence against the subject with the enthronement of a mechanical factor as authority’ (p. 145). What is at stake in the aesthetic question is the moral and political status of subjectivity in general. To some degree, the ‘humanistic’ tradition of music whose collapse Adorno laments was meant to uphold subjectivity and defend it against dehumanising mechanisms, specifically those associated with the triumph of modernity. But this becomes increasingly implausible as music itself becomes dependent on ‘a mechanical factor as authority’ – ‘mechanical reproduction’ in the twin senses of recording technology and modes of performance lacking a ‘free’ subjective element.

The limit of listening, the line between expression and simulation, has at least three distinguishing features. First, this limit is essentially social. It denies the listener entry to the broad, nurturing and governing intersubjective community by a perceived over-reliance on style, technique or form, elements generally backed by the authority of a social or professional subculture. The listener feels both called upon to listen and excluded from listening. Hegel and Tolstoy make this a matter of competence, but it is more one of judgement; a listener can understand a piece well enough but still decide that it is getting in its own way, or trying to keep the wrong people out of its way.

Second, the limit of listening is marked by a forced particularity. It occurs where the subject’s capacity to heed the big Other in modified form is exceeded, the point at which to heed the particulars anointed by the Other would be to lose subjectivity and become the Other’s puppet. Another way to say this is that at the limit of listening the call of the big Other seems indifferent to the welfare of the subject. The latter can pay heed without loss of self only if he can feel, not only that the call is really addressed to him, but also addressed with care or concern for him. Freud had a suggestive formula for this: for the ego, living means being loved by the superego (Freud 1962, p. 48). The big Other must call with a measure of love; lacking that, it can address the

subject only by force. Underpinning this side of the drama is the perception that the voice of authority is always, constitutively, the voice of force, the 'founding violence' that Walter Benjamin theorised as inherent to all law.<sup>11</sup>

This element of latent violence can be illustrated in another statement by Hegel that describes how music, even if it embodies spiritual content at the level of composition, may fail to do so at the level of performance: 'The player has a duty to bring the work feelingly to life in the sense and spirit of the composer, and not to give the impression of being a musical automaton who recites a mere lesson and repeats mechanically what has been dictated to him' (H p. 216, K p. 956). By failing in his duty to animate the music with sense and spirit, the performer who over-relies on technique surrenders to duty in a more odious sense of the term. He loses the potential generosity of intersubjective exchange by treating the score as a command. Defaulting on his own qualities of sense and spirit, he becomes the social equivalent of a musical automaton, someone who merely repeats without understanding what has been dictated to him, and in whom therefore the dictatorial element of the big Other – the very element that music above all should suspend – stands revealed.<sup>12</sup>

Third, the concern over simulation that emerges at the limit of listening overlaps with the general anxiety over the boundaries between human and machine, subject and automaton, that is one of the defining conditions of the modern era. Part of this concern might be considered a metaphysical instance of the power of 'bad examples' to throw subjectivity into question, along lines recently suggested by Carolyn Abbate; if music simulates subjectivity mechanically, subjectivity itself might turn out to be mechanical. From the second half of the nineteenth century, however, through to the first half of the twentieth, machine metaphors figure less powerfully in the metaphysical arena than in the field of historical 'metanarratives'. The machine signifies the expanding power of science, technology and industry, so that to merge it with subjectivity would be to submit to the soulless apparatus of modernity in alienation from some form of organic society – the twentieth-century version of Rousseau's critique of Enlightenment culture. This is thus more a worry for Tolstoy than for Hegel – but also for Adorno, who takes it head on, and for Armstrong, who attributes the false 'science' of bebop to 'modern malice' (Walser 1998, p. 153). The primary force of the mechanical trope is the worry that subjectivity under the conditions of modernity will fall victim to the means of representing it.

## VI

To sum up thus far: the aesthetics of western music since the Enlightenment have often turned on an antinomy between expressive content and formal elaboration. Descriptions of engaged listening suggest that this theoretical

disposition maps the historical experience of two contrary tendencies ascribed to music: on the one hand, to animate otherwise inert sonoric material with subjective life, and, on the other, to inhibit or travesty precisely that mysterious or uncanny animation. Examining some representative samples of these tendencies has made it possible to frame a model of musical subjectivity as interlocution in historically grounded terms. I would now like to ask what the consequences might be for our conception of the relationships among subjectivity, musical meaning and musical analysis.

This question may find a hermeneutic window in an additional feature of the limit of listening that, like Hegel's diagnosis, deserves to be taken more seriously than it usually is. This is the widespread feeling that music's expressive magic disappears when its nuts and bolts become evident. There is for most people a great gap between what one can say about music technically and what it is like to listen and enjoy. The existence of this gap (which elsewhere I have argued should be affirmed rather than deplored<sup>13</sup>) has sometimes been used to criticise efforts at musical hermeneutics and to justify a quasi-autonomous sphere of musical form or structure that does, indeed, need to be understood in and for itself. From this perspective, what becomes inert at the limit of listening is not musical subjectivity but precisely non-musical subjectivity; the limit can be pushed back by concentrating on the musical devices and taking them as the true source of 'spiritual content'. In short, the gap has been used as a defence of immanent musical aesthetics, the conceptual component of which is immanent musical analysis.<sup>14</sup> The gap, however, can equally well be used to suggest that any such separate sphere of musical immanence upholds the lifelessness that arises at the limit of listening. Ironically, the effect of being alienated by a piece of music coincides with that of – supposedly – understanding it in depth.

I want to develop precisely this suggestion, but without turning it into a criticism or dismissal of analysis. On the contrary: I want to suggest that crossing the limit into inanimate musical mechanism, whether as ad hoc response or the outcome of deliberate analytical description, is part and parcel of the interlocutory production of musical subjectivity.

But what does 'analysis' mean here? As the Tolstoy example shows, some sort of implicit formal understanding will almost surely play a part in the recognition or construction of subject positions, while at the same time there is no obvious way to separate this sort of understanding from attempts to enunciate the subjective relations of the music. There is, nonetheless, a pragmatic way to make this separation. For present purposes 'analysis' will mean a discourse that, purely at the level of statement, focuses primarily on the formal elements of music and is understood – no matter how closely it may mesh with more 'subjective' or hermeneutic statements – to be capable of development independent of any other focus. It would be equally misguided to

deny that many professionals do not confine themselves to analysis in this narrow sense, and that many – sometimes the same people – do precisely that. Just so there is no suspicion that I am beating a dead horse, here are a few titles from the programme of the meeting of the Society for Music Theory held in Toronto in November 2000: ‘The Multivalence of Axis-Tone “D” in the History and Evolution of Symmetrical Inversion’, ‘A Model of Pitch-Class Set Associations and Voice-Leading for Atonal Music’, ‘Precursive Prolongation’, ‘Hexatonic and Nonatonic Cycles in Late Nineteenth-Century Music’, ‘Modes, Scales, Functional Harmony and Non-Functional Harmony in the Compositions of Herbie Hancock’, ‘Domenico Scarlatti and the Hidden Voice Exchange’.

Analysis in the narrow sense depersonalises or desubjectivises the musical work in the sense of bracketing or at least temporarily voiding its subject positions. For the time being, this claim should be taken as value-neutral; at no time should it be taken as a simple denial of a relationship between subjectivity and analysis. The initial concern here is not with the significance of this principle of depersonalisation but with the way it typically operates.

Its operation can be said to rest on at least two bases. The first is the recuperative character of the analytical act, which relates musical phenomena to a norm (usually unity, consistency, coherence, system) even if only to specify the norm’s non-realisation; the music is disengaged from independence of agency and autonomised/automatised. The second, and more important for present purposes, is the generation of descriptions by a taxonomic-descriptive system that does not require a historicised subject. To state this more strongly, the descriptions exclude such a subject, exclude the density of affect and concept, memory and desire, that fill up and at times even overgrow such a subject. Strictly speaking, the subject addressed by a traditional analytical description is a transparent register for musical phenomena, a pure translation of perception into musical consciousness. No actual listener is ever this subject, and analysts, of course, know it, though I have been told that people do try to discipline themselves to listen without being distracted by their own identities. At one time I tried to do so myself – failing all the way. It would put me to sleep: and I take this as more than a comment on my penchant for wool-gathering. The sleep was a metaphor for what this mode of listening was doing to my sense of myself as a subject.

Its degree of fictitiousness aside, the ‘classic’ analytical description, as both rhetoric and truth-claim, projects an object of pure musical intentionality severed from any subjectivity other than that required to register it. At issue here, in a Foucauldian spirit, is neither the intentions behind such descriptions nor their subtexts and circumstances, but their character as statements. Although historically conditioned and personally defined human subjects produce analytical descriptions, and the technical disagreements and personal

hunches and perceptions of these subjects reflect their inevitable differences, the descriptions themselves, in their rhetorical form and conceptual disposition, excise most of the traces of the subjectively conditioned process that produces them. Similarly, individual acts of listening may be acknowledged to reintroduce the subjective element, but only as an addition, a wrapping of or parasitic attachment to the core object of analytical description. Put crudely, Jack may hear the finale of the Shostakovich Fifth Symphony as Stalinist boilerplate, and Jill as closet dissidence, but both hear the march rhythms and emphatic cadences.

To put this with more refinement: to say, and believe, that the Adagio of the 'Moonlight' Sonata expresses Beethoven's sorrow over a failed romance, one must be in a cultural situation that allows one to hear music as sincere, unmediated personal expression, as many were in the early nineteenth century. To say, and believe, that the same movement is part of Beethoven's attempt to play off 'fantasy' against 'form' in the history of the sonata, one must be in a cultural position to hear music as a stable expression of formal intentions linked more to a struggle for original creation than to the desire for personal or autobiographical expression. But to say, and believe, that the departure from the tonic after bar 6 depends on a reinterpretation of the subdominant (iv of C# minor treated as ii of E major), or that the melodic apex of the first section's treble line corresponds to both a resumption of tonic harmony and the completion of a structural arpeggiation of the C# minor triad, one need only know what the analytical terms mean and accept their descriptive adequacy; and the same would hold good of more sophisticated analytical acts, including those subject – as even these are – to dispute among analysts.<sup>15</sup>

And let me stress again: it does not matter that one knows perfectly well that analysis is not really verifiable in a strong sense. It does not matter that one realises that the famous 'neutral level' of analytical description does not exist. It does not matter that one has a sophisticated awareness of the contingency, artifactuality and heuristic relativity of analytic languages. Analytical discourse nonetheless involves, precisely insofar as it is analytical, a rhetorical and propositional character that has the neutralising and autonomising/automatising effects described here. To express this dynamically: between two subjectivities, that embedded in the music and that practised by the listener, analysis desubjectifies; it depersonalises.

Again, though: none of this is to criticise analysis, though I would be critical of any musical understanding that takes analysis as its *ne plus ultra*, or – what amounts to the same thing – ostensibly goes beyond analysis while still holding fast to the presuppositions in which analysis, willy-nilly, is grounded. To say that analysis desubjectifies music is merely to indicate its role in musical understanding. Perhaps my earlier formulation should be varied: between two subjectivities, located in the music and the listener, analysis opens a latent

interval in which subjectivity is suspended. The character of this interval cannot be assumed in advance, but it does need to be accounted for. To bridge it, to take the step from subjectivity to hermeneutics, analysis must in some sense be traversed, both to delimit and to multiply sites of meaning. From the standpoint of enjoying music, the cultural standpoint that values music for its relation to subjectivity, the delimiting-multiplying capacity is what gives analysis its primary value. That is, analysis is not asked, should no longer be asked, to define the object against which all claims of musical understanding or meaning have to be measured, and thus to lay the foundations of a musical semiotics or hermeneutics. It is asked, rather, to provide the wherewithal for meanings associated with particular subject-positions to embody themselves in the fuller elaborations of musical technique. In terms of our exposition: analysis moves music in the Grimm direction the better to let it swing back, pendulum like, to the Rousseau position.

The capacity of analysis to elaborate itself autonomously does not figure in this mission, not because that capacity is inherently valueless but because it lies outside the network of subjectivities. Still, one might argue more strongly that analytical autonomy is at least open to question. It does not follow from the fact that an analytical description is possible that it is important, or humanly significant, or even discernible outside a community organised around the possibility of its discernment. This point may serve to answer the pained and pointed question raised by Pieter van den Toorn in his broadside against the so-called 'new musicology', that is, the question of why analytical elaboration is any less an example of 'human meaning' than social or emotional or sexual content (van den Toorn 1995). The answer is that, though a Terentian '*nihil humanorum alienum mihi*' does have a certain ecumenical appeal, purely analytical discourse lies outside the discursive systems by which western societies produce 'humanly significant' subjectivity; in Wittgensteinian terms, analytical elaboration does not belong to the relevant language game, or, in Bakhtinian terms, to the operative speech genre. To identify 'human interest' with analytical elaboration is, in effect, a linguistic mistake, a category error. When non-professional listeners express impatience or dismay at analytical detail, or see it as a hindrance to their pleasure or appreciation, what they are showing is not their anti-intellectualism but their linguistic competence.

## VII

The key question, then, is how that which desubjectifies can also resubjectify: how can the subjectivity cut out of musical analysis be cut back in? The cadenza of the Chopin E $\flat$  Nocturne consists of a little *gruppetto* in the high treble that is accelerated, crescendo, into a screechy blur with the help of continuous pedal, then decelerated, decrescendo, to the eventual pedal release

Ex. 2 Chopin, Nocturne in E $\flat$ , cadenza

The musical score for Chopin's Nocturne in E $\flat$  major, cadenza section, is presented in two systems. The first system features a treble clef staff with a complex rhythmic pattern of eighth and sixteenth notes, and a bass clef staff with a simple accompaniment. The second system continues the treble staff with a melodic line and the bass staff with a more active accompaniment. Performance markings include 'sempre', 'cresc.', 'Tempo I°', 'dimin.', 'rallent. smorz.', 'pp', and 'ppp'. A dashed line with the number '8' is above the first system.

(Ex. 2). Analysis can explain this event as an instance of triple neighbour motion around the fifth scale degree, perhaps adding that it both echoes the teasing play with dominant harmony in the A sections and decisively asserts the dominant that settles cadentially into the codetta. But this description says nothing about what the cadenza means – whether, for example, it suggests a moment of ironic detachment or even hostility towards the general atmosphere of sensitivity and refinement, or proposes an unsettling intrusion of objectified sonority on the work's subjective field, or, in Tolstoyan terms, suddenly withdraws the generosity of subjective address in favour of an enigmatic gesture pointing to, but also veiling, the subjectivity of the composer.

The analytical identity of the cadenza is consistent, in different ways, with all of these suggestions, but a discrete meaning has to be cut out of the subject position addressed by the piece and pasted on the analytical field before the latter can be 'resubjectified'. Like a little cut-out figure, a kind of paper doll, an idea or image from the subject position is stuck on the analytical description. The result, again with a quasi-uncanny effect, is that the cut-out becomes a graft and turns the analytical field at large into a figure of subjectivity. Or better: the small figure, the cut-out, actually comes first, conceptually if not chronologically, so that the analytical field is actually produced as the extension of the subjective graft. The little dancing figure, like the inkspot in the classic cartoon series that flows from the animator's pen and comes to life before the spectator's eyes, is what gives consistency and sense to the analytical field and

unites it to the uncanny animation of music, the lifelike presence of a free-floating subjectivity.

One might argue that this grafting and animation in fact always happens, even in the most traditional analysis, which, however, acts as if the cut-out figure were invisible. But I am less interested in deconstructing the objectivity of analysis, which I am here arguing has a legitimate use, than in harnessing it for wider ends. The desubjectifying element is not merely a flat-footed negation, but a potentially dialectical one. It can promote a questioning and suspension of subjective assumptions, understood in the double sense of presuppositions and acts of taking on. Analytical impassivity may help open an emerging subject position to an unaccommodated otherness that it may otherwise myopically or even oppressively fail to encounter. In this respect the analytical passage unites the power of a discovery procedure with a genuine ethical function.

Accounts of musical subjectivity have often been bedevilled by a nagging sense of futility. The subjective content of music feels unimpeachably real, but the moment one tries to specify it, it risks seeming paper-thin by comparison to the solidity of form, technique and structure, the stuff of analytical understanding. Yet it is precisely by recognising and holding open the gap between analytical description and the mysteries of animation that we can best do justice to both the infinite plasticity of 'purely musical' relations and the social, psychological, even spiritual force of the subject positions without which music is so much lifeless sound. Like the dancers and swimmers of a cut-out by Matisse, the 'little figure' of musical subjectivity translates weightlessness and abstraction into an uncanny impression of embodied life. Recognising this would lead us to validate 'amateur' initiatives like Tolstoy's, however wrong-headed they might seem, by seeking to understand them as a way of understanding music. It might also encourage us to take such initiatives ourselves. This would involve far more than just enfranchising the personal element in all criticism, miscalled 'subjectivity'. It would mean recognising subjectivity within the framework of musical interlocution as both the form and content of musical understanding itself.

## REFERENCES

- Abbate, Carolyn, 2000: 'Outside Ravel's Tomb', *Journal of the American Musicological Society*, 52/iii, pp. 465–530.
- Adorno, Theodor W., 1973: *Philosophy of Modern Music*, trans. Anne G. Mitchell and Wesley V. Blomster (New York: Seabury Press).
- Althusser, Louis, 1970: 'Ideology and Ideological State Apparatuses (Notes Towards an Investigation)', trans. unattributed, in Žižek 1994, pp. 100–140.
- Armstrong, Louis, 1949: interview in *Down Beat*, 17 June 1949, quoted in Walser

- 1999, pp. 153–4.
- Auden, W. H., 1967: *Collected Shorter Poems* (New York: Random House).
- Beach, David (ed.), 1983: *Aspects of Schenkerian Theory* (New Haven: Yale University Press).
- Benjamin, Walter, 1921: 'The Critique of Violence' ['Zur Kritik der Gewalt'], in Walter Benjamin, *Reflections: Essays, Aphorisms, Autobiographical Writings*, ed. Peter Demetz, trans. Edmund Jephcott (New York: Schocken, 1986).
- Butler, Judith, 1997: *Excitable Speech: A Politics of the Performative* (New York: Routledge).
- Clayton, Martin, Herbert, Trevor and Middleton, Richard (eds.), forthcoming: *The Cultural Study of Music* (New York: Routledge).
- Cook, Nicholas and Everist, Mark (eds.), 1999: *Rethinking Music* (Oxford: Oxford University Press).
- Cornell, Drucilla, Rosenfeld, Michel and Carlson, David Gray (eds.), 1992: *Deconstruction and the Possibility of Justice* (New York: Routledge).
- Derrida, Jacques, 1972: *Margins of Philosophy*, trans. Alan Bass (Chicago, University of Chicago Press).
- \_\_\_\_\_, 1976: *Of Grammatology*, trans. Gayatri Charavorty Spivak (Baltimore: Johns Hopkins).
- Freud, Sigmund, 1962: *The Ego and the Id*, trans. James Strachey (New York: Norton).
- Grimm, Jakob, 1851: 'On the Origin of Language', trans. Ralph R. Read III, in Willson 1982, pp. 257–92.
- Hegel, G. W. F., 1838: *Vorlesungen Über die Aesthetik*, ed. D. H. G. Hotho (Berlin: Dunker and Humblot), 3 vols.
- \_\_\_\_\_, 1975: *Aesthetics: Lectures on Fine Art*, trans. T. M. Knox (Oxford: Oxford University Press), 2 vols.
- Kaes, Anton, Jay, Martin and Dimendberg, Edward (eds.), 1994: *The Weimar Republic Sourcebook* (Berkeley: University of California Press).
- Kramer, Lawrence, 1995: *Classical Music and Postmodern Knowledge* (Berkeley: University of California Press).
- \_\_\_\_\_, 2001: *Musical Meaning: Toward a Critical History* (Berkeley: University of California Press).
- \_\_\_\_\_, forthcoming, 'Subjectivity Rampant! Music, Hermeneutics and History', in Clayton *et al.* (eds.), forthcoming.
- Lacan, Jacques, 1981: *Four Fundamental Concepts of Psychoanalysis*, ed. Jacques-Alain Miller, trans. Alan Sheridan (New York: Norton).
- Maltin, Leonard, 1987: *Of Mice and Magic: A History of American Animated Cartoons*, rev. edn. (New York: New American Library).
- Marek, George and Gordon-Smith, Maria, 1978: *Chopin* (New York: Harper and Row).
- Metzner, Paul, 1998: *Crescendo of the Virtuoso: Spectacle, Skill, and Self-*

- Promotion in Paris During the Age of Revolution* (Berkeley: University of California Press).
- Nagel, Ivan, 1991: *Autonomy and Mercy* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press).
- Tomlinson, Gary, 1999: 'Vico's Songs: Detours at the Origins of (Ethno)musicology', *Musical Quarterly*, 83/iii, pp. 344–77.
- Oster, Ernst, 1947: 'The *Fantaisie-Improptu*: A Tribute to Beethoven', in Beach 1983, pp. 189–207.
- Richter, David (ed.), 1998: *The Critical Tradition: Classic Texts and Contemporary Trends*, 2nd edn. (Boston: Bedford).
- Rousseau, Jean-Jacques, 1990: *Essay on the Origin of Language*, in *The First and Second Discourses and Essay on the Origin of Languages*, trans. Victor Gourevitch (New York: Harper and Row).
- Schoenberg, Arnold, 1975: *Style and Idea*, ed. Leonard Stein, trans. Leo Black (Berkeley: University of California Press).
- Tolstoy, Leo, 1897: 'What is Art?', trans. Aylmer Maude, in Richter 1998, pp. 472–80.
- van den Toorn, Pieter, 1995: *Music, Politics, and the Academy* (Berkeley: University of California Press).
- Wagner, Richard, 1966: *The Artwork of the Future*, vol. 1 of *Richard Wagner's Prose Works*, trans. William Ashton Ellis (Broude: New York).
- Walser, Robert (ed.), 1999: *Keeping Time: Readings in Jazz History* (New York: Oxford University Press).
- Wilde, Oscar, 1891: 'The Critic as Artist', in *The Artist as Critic: Critical Writings of Oscar Wilde*, ed. Richard Ellmann (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1982).
- Willson, Leslie (ed.), 1982: *German Romantic Criticism* (New York: Seabury Press).
- Žižek, Slavoj, 1993a: *Looking Awry: An Introduction to Jacques Lacan Through Popular Culture* (Cambridge, MA: MIT Press).
- \_\_\_\_\_, 1993b: *Tarrying with the Negative: Kant, Hegel, and the Critique of Ideology* (Durham, NC: Duke University Press).
- \_\_\_\_\_, (ed.), 1994: *Mapping Ideology* (London: Verso).
- \_\_\_\_\_, 1997: *The Plague of Fantasies* (London: Verso).

## NOTES

1. Rousseau, we might say, postulates two relations between music and language: a unity at the hypothetical origin and a disparity favouring music in empirical reality. But it is just this disparity that functions as an intelligible trace of the origin. For fuller discussion of these problems, see Derrida 1976, pp. 195–216. On the equivocal relation of the categories 'music' and 'song' see Tomlinson 1999.

2. See 'Analysis and Truth or the Closure of the Unconscious', in Lacan 1981, pp. 136–48.
3. See Žižek 1993a, pp. 69–83, 130–53, and Žižek 1993b, pp. 69–79, 120–24.
4. My account of music and the big Other ironically puts me at odds with Žižek himself, who, in one of his occasional forays on the topic, writes that music 'at its most elementary [is] an act of *supplication*: a call to the figure of the big Other (beloved Lady, King, God . . .) to *respond*, not as the symbolic big Other, but in the real of his or her being' (Žižek 1997, p. 192; emphases and ellipsis in original). This is a more or less explicit expansion of Ivan Nagel's argument about Mozart's operas in *Autonomy and Mercy* (Nagel 1991) to cover music in general. It makes the fatal (but familiar) mistake of freezing the meaning of music into a single allegorical posture, thereby effectively removing music from the sphere of communicative action.
5. See Hegel 1975, pp. 887–92, 904–8. For discussion see 'The Pit and the Pyramid: An Introduction to Hegel's Semiotics', in Derrida 1972, pp. 91–5.
6. The quoted lines are strictly speaking uttered by 'Gilbert', Wilde's spokesman in this dialogical essay.
7. My translation; compare that of Knox in Hegel 1975, p. 933. Further references are given in the text with the abbreviations H and K, respectively. Unlike Rousseau, Hegel recognises harmony as a necessity, but it is one he deeply distrusts. His attitude is symptomatic. One of the great ironies of nineteenth-century musical aesthetics is that the era's explosive harmonic innovation is continually dogged by a bad conscience about harmonic excess. Even Wagner, associating harmony with subjective depth rather than artifice in *The Artwork of the Future* (1850; Wagner 1966), identifies the utopia of musical aesthetics with the curbing and sublimation of harmonic plenitude.
8. On synchronised sound and animated cartoons, see Maltin 1987. On nineteenth-century virtuosity and the rise of mass entertainment, see Metzner 1998 and chapter 4 of Kramer 2001.  
I have left out of my account, as digressive, any reference to fictional characters and poetic personae, which strictly speaking are bodiless. Suffice it to say (for now) that these virtual subjects differ from those of music in having the potential to be successfully visualised, which is to say, fitted to their 'own' bodies. By contrast, the musical performer (even the improviser or singer-songwriter) is always a mere surrogate, a medium or instrument for a separate subjectivity that, paradoxically, inheres only in a music that can itself inhere only in a person.
9. This constructive tendency to 'misfire' is arguably a product of the performative character of language; see 'Signature Event Context', in Derrida 1972, pp. 307–30.
10. Robert Burns, 'A Red, Red Rose', l. 1; Algernon Charles Swinburne, 'A Forsaken Garden', ll. 51–2.
11. See 'The Critique of Violence', in Benjamin 1986, pp. 277–300, and Derrida, 'Force of Law: "The Mystical Foundation of Authority"', in Cornell *et al.* 1992, pp. 3–67.

12. For a different reading of this passage, see Abbate, 2000, p. 479. Abbate nudges Hegel's machine metaphor towards an ironic-deconstructive literalness, or at least virtuality, so that the performer becomes less the animating force than the animated form, but in doing so she is forced to ignore the strongly voluntaristic rhetoric of the passage. Perhaps the question of automatisisation/animation is best treated here at the level of Hegel's curious idea of the performer's duty to animate the music, which amounts to a duty to have feelings, or more exactly to have them vibrantly. Part of this duty involves acquiring the technical skill necessary to transcend technique and 'move [in the] technical element with complete freedom'. By that means the performer's 'genius' enters the arena of spirit where his activity consists of 'actually reaching in the reproduction the spiritual height of the composer and then bringing it to life' (H p. 216, K p. 956). In effect the ideal performer submits to a *rite de passage*, mediated by training and practice, that leads from automatisisation to animation.
13. See my 'Subjectivity Rampant! Music, Hermeneutics and History', in Clayton *et al.* (eds.), forthcoming.
14. See, for example, Scott Burnham, 'How Music Matters: Poetic Content Revisited', in Cook and Everist (eds.) 1999, pp. 193–216.
15. On the structural arpeggiation, see Ernst Oster, 'The *Fantaisie-Improptu*: A Tribute to Beethoven,' in Beach (ed.) 1983, pp. 196–7.