

# Music as Heard

A STUDY IN APPLIED PHENOMENOLOGY

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## Contents

Preface	vii
1: Introduction	1
2: The Nature of Phenomena and Phenomenological Description	19
3: Essential Backgrounds of Experience	50
4: Time in Motion	81
5: Space in Motion	137
6: The Play Element	205
7: The Stratum of Feeling	272
Notes	299
Bibliography	305
Index	310

## Preface

As the title indicates, this book is a study of musical experience from the phenomenological point of view. One is tempted to pose the rhetorical question, What is phenomenology? But this question was asked by Merleau-Ponty in 1945 in the preface to his *Phenomenology of Perception*, when Husserlian phenomenology was already about forty years old. If it has not yet been answered by either Husserl himself or subsequent phenomenologists, then I myself respectfully decline to answer it, at least in formal terms. To be sure, some idea of what phenomenology is will be revealed by the way it is used, but the main emphasis here is on how one thinks phenomenologically, and on the sort of phenomenological thought that can be communicated. The same option was taken by Virgil Aldrich in his *Philosophy of Art*.

So it is possible to think and write phenomenologically without getting bogged down in questions of method. In view of the audience to which this book is primarily directed, it is evident that the better part of wisdom lies precisely in communicating a phenomenological attitude. It is difficult enough for musicians to acquire a musical vocabulary without asking that they acquire a phenomenological one as well. And the vocabulary of phenomenology is formidable indeed. It is partly due to this vocabulary that phenomenology has been so misunderstood and, for that reason, criticized. Phenomenology attaches special meanings to such terms as *absolute*, *a priori*, *evidence*, *intuition*, *subjectivity*, and *individual*, which, if misunderstood, can easily distort the purposes of phenomenology into something quite hopelessly quixotic and regrettably old-fashioned. Furthermore, stranger terms exist, such as *intentionality*, *noesis-noema*, *eidetic reduction*, *presentification*, etc., which would require extensive description, even though the concepts to which these terms refer can be used without telling anyone, so to speak. Even so, it has not been possible to keep the language of the book uncluttered by professional words. *Phenomenon*, for example, could not be omitted. In addition, I have used *transcendental* to refer to a significance independent of causation and mode of empirical actualization, and *constitution* to describe a process by which the person orients himself toward a particular object which assumes significance for him in a certain way. Thus, it is possible to constitute a sounding object as a piece of music, where



before, its significance was simply as a perhaps bothersome acoustical event. Terms such as *retention*, *protention*, and *constitution* were felt to be indispensable to a phenomenological account of time experiences. I have also used *neutralization* in places where *phenomenological reduction* would otherwise apply. While this makes for swifter comprehension for musicians, I hasten to add that it might be troublesome to phenomenologists, whose pairing of these two terms is less deliberate. Other than these, I believe that all other technical words used here are those which lie well within the domain of traditional music theory and criticism.

But perhaps I can answer another question: Why phenomenology? Isn't music already burdened with enough -isms and -ologies? Joseph Kernan rightly warns us that "methodologies resemble ideologies in their tendency to lead charmed lives of their own absurdly abstracted from the real world."<sup>1</sup> But the method of phenomenology consists precisely in refraining as much as possible from constructing a pre-fabricated method to impose on the composition, and phenomenology itself is different in kind from other methods and points of view (e.g., behaviorism, nominalism, and phenomenalism) in that it is a "first" philosophy. It studies how it is possible to have a behavioristic or nominalistic attitude, and such a study necessarily involves both the acting subject and the qualities of an event or object. In a sense, phenomenology is simply a more consciously pursued and thorough exploration of the notion, held by all true scientists, that "objectivity" has a subjective (person-oriented) foundation. Thus Michael Polanyi:

If we decided to examine the universe objectively in the sense of paying equal attention to portions of equal mass, this would result in a lifelong preoccupation with interstellar dust, relieved only at brief intervals by a survey of incandescent masses of hydrogen—not in a thousand million lifetimes would the turn come to give man even a second's notice. It goes without saying that no one—scientists included—looks at the universe this way, whatever lip-service is given to 'objectivity'. Nor should this surprise us. For, as human beings, we must inevitably see the universe from a centre lying within ourselves and speak about it in terms of a human language shaped by the exigencies of human intercourse. Any attempt rigorously to eliminate our human perspective from our picture of the world must lead to absurdity.<sup>2</sup>

The phenomenological attitude was chosen, then, as a way of uttering meaningful statements which are objective in the sense that they attempt

to describe the musical object adequately, and subjective in the sense that they issue from a subject to whom an object has some meaning. But *subjective* in this sense does not necessarily mean mere opinion: it means reciprocity. It is reciprocity which is too often forgotten or suppressed by music research. To approach music—which is privileged in its ability to represent nothing and express everything—the way a scientist approaches an experiment is to engage in an inauthentic sort of objectivity. But Richard Palmer, discussing the procedures of literary criticism, suggests that

a work does not speak by being cut to pieces in order for the analytical reader to see how and why it is made as it is; one must enable a work to speak by knowing how to listen. . . . To put the matter in the familiar terminology of Martin Buber's I-thou relationship, it is helpful to see the work not as an it that is at my disposal but as a thou who addresses me, and to remember that meaning is not an objective, eternal idea but something that arises in relationship.<sup>3</sup>

However, the most telling contribution of a phenomenological attitude is the means it offers for uncovering and describing phenomena which are immanent in the composition and presented by it. This is different from the more traditional purpose of analysis, which describes how certain events or compositional procedures are constitutive of the composition. In other words, after we follow the usual analytic route and ask, How does "overlap," "prolongation," or "intersection" contribute to the composition's intelligibility? We can then focus on the question, How does this piece present "overlap," "prolongation," etc., as a meaning? How are these phenomena experienced? In a perfect world, these two emphases would comprise two sides of the same coin.

This redirection of the analytic searchlight implies two things: phenomenological description is not a substitute for technical analysis, but we should resist making technical analysis its own purpose. Thus, while phenomenology may not be the best way to improve one's practical musicianship (performing, composing, etc.), it is able, because of this, to transcend analytic methods derived from specific compositional grammars, such as those found in tonal and serial music. This gives phenomenology a wide range of applicability.

The compositions exemplified in this book are among those which I have already analyzed in some prephenomenological manner, and with which I have some familiarity. They were also selected on the assump-

tion that most other musicians would be familiar with them. In several cases, it was not always possible to reproduce excerpts from the composition being discussed. For example, reproduction of fourteen pages of the full score to the *Rite of Spring* presents physical, financial, and legal problems. These problems became particularly acute for contemporary music, where again, reproduction of full scores was impossible (consider Ligeti's *Atmospheres*), and reduction was impractical. This is doubly unfortunate, because a phenomenological attitude can describe the newer music more faithfully than methods which rely on the existence of a score printed in traditional notation and which, for that reason, arouses the suspicion that it is the notation more than the music which is being analyzed. In addition, contemporary composers write "phenomenological" music in their efforts to present musical essences—movement, shape, duration, succession, color, play, and feeling—without cluttering their pieces with such literary imports as plot (theme), character development (thematic manipulation), and structure (beginning, middle, and end). Contemporary composers also realize that the old ideals of unity, organization, and cohesiveness, to the extent that they are still ideals, are as much a product of subjective constitution as compositional givenness. The world is not a booming, buzzing confusion, and it is difficult not to synthesize some organization into disparate experiences. In this respect, both phenomenology and contemporary music teach us that rigorous analysis requires only one thing: to listen carefully to what is given, making sure that what is given is the music itself.

At the risk of exasperating the purists, I do not find it possible to adhere to the thought of any single phenomenologist, but will resort to a certain necessary eclecticism to strengthen my own ideas. Nevertheless, I will not extend the use of the term *phenomenology* further into history than Edmund Husserl (1859–1938). More than anyone else, Husserl's work forms the basis, even today, of all serious phenomenological studies. His ideas had a profound effect on what is popularly known as existentialism (somewhat misnamed). Another major figure whose presence can be felt throughout this book is Maurice Merleau-Ponty (1908–61). He examined the nature of art more thoroughly than did Husserl, but even more importantly, his phenomenology of the lived body permeates my own interpretation of music as a bodily experience, not just an aural or intellectual experience.

Those who already know something of phenomenology also know that its program is neither completely specified nor entirely free of

problems (e.g., there is rarely agreement about what is essential or self-evident). In any case, these studies will no doubt be subjected to a certain amount of criticism. So much the better. Concerning the *important* questions of musical experience, there are more than enough problems to go around.



## 1: Introduction

### THE POINT OF DEPARTURE

The words encountered here comprise a description of the phenomenon of music. In the interests of accuracy and completeness, the description is obliged to discuss two separate but related aspects of music: its objects and the human experience of its objects.

Already, three fundamental assumptions have been made: (1) that words can describe musical objects and their experience, at least to the extent that it is possible to find in the sense of the words something quite close to the sense of the music; (2) that there is no music without the presence of a human being assuming whatever stance of receptivity is needed to make sounds musical for him; (3) that words like *music* and *musical object* refer to specific and recognizable aspects of the human world. But this doesn't mean that such words are easy to define. All the more reason, then, to spend a few moments here in providing at least an operational definition of what the word *music*, in this book, refers to.

Music is an ordered arrangement of sounds and silences whose meaning is presentative rather than denotative. This sounds innocuous enough. Perhaps the plot will begin to thicken if I suggest that this definition distinguishes music, as an end in itself, from compositional technique, and from sounds as purely physical objects. Furthermore, the definition implies nothing about the intentions of the composer, or indeed, about whether there is a composer (although it turns out that there usually is one). It says nothing about the status of the score or about the nature of the instruments. Both the score and the instruments are as dispensable as the composer. To be more precise, then, I should say that music is the actualization of the possibility of any sound whatever to present to some human being a meaning which he experiences with his body—that is to say, with his mind, his feelings, his senses, his will, and his metabolism.

This raises the obvious question, What sorts of sounds are *not* music? This cannot be answered by a consideration of the sounds alone, since the same sound, under different circumstances, can be interpreted as either music or nonmusic. For example, Alan Merriam writes that

different reactions are shown to what may be physically the same sound according to where and how it is used. . . . In Akan society, if

someone scraped mud off a bottle with the lid of a cigarette tin, he would produce noise as a by-product. If he performed this act of scraping in the performance of ahyewa music, the sound, though similar, would have a different meaning. It would be purposeful in a musical sense.<sup>1</sup>

The suggestion here is that the difference between music and nonmusic lies in the use that the experiencing person makes of the sounds. In other words, the difference lies in the different forms of human behavior. Accordingly, the above question becomes transformed into What is meant by musical behavior? A more complete answer to this question is presented in chapter 7. For now, I will only say that a musically behaving person is one whose very being is absorbed in the significance of the sounds being experienced. This significance is not associative, denotative, or otherwise symbolic, but is presented in and by the sounds themselves. It is not altogether accurate to say that this person is listening *to* the sounds. First, the person is doing more than listening: he is perceiving, interpreting, judging, and feeling. Second, the preposition "to" puts too much stress on the sounds as such. Thus, the musically behaving person experiences musical significance by means of, or through, the sounds. But it is not the sounds themselves to which he is listening. The experience of piano music is not one which demands that we listen to pianos. Taken precisely as pianos, these instruments are capable of producing some curious sounds. But the music which it is possible to experience when someone uses the piano as a musical instrument is something else. Paul Klee wrote something similar in 1907:

Lamond, a warm person, not a pianist like Reisenauer: he just plays the piano; the human quality comes out of the total performance; the individual sounds come from the piano. When Reisenauer played, it wasn't a piano, it was magic.<sup>2</sup>

In other words, the sound source—in this case, a piano—must be there if we are to experience music at all. But it is precisely the knowledge *that* such and such an instrument is indeed the sound source which is not necessarily included in the experience itself. It could be that this is one reason why humans invented musical instruments in the first place. It is easier to use a musical instrument to make music than to use pots and pans, although we can guarantee neither that we will always perceive music emanating from a musical instrument, nor that pots and pans are intrinsically incapable of providing the medium for musical experience.

So far, I have talked about two things which separate music from nonmusic. The first is that musical meaning is presentative. While it cannot categorically be stated that the sounds made by pots and pans, or a roomful of cocktail sippers, can never be musical, nevertheless, as long as I cannot transcend the condition that, in fact, I am hearing pots and pans or people gossiping over cocktails, then I do not confuse this sonic experience with a musical experience. I am constantly making an association between these sounds and the objects which produce them. They are signs of something occurring in the factual world, and music, whatever else it is, is not factually in the world the way trees and mountains are. Musical experience does not necessarily include awareness of sounds as representing or symbolizing some experience. Musical meanings refer to nothing but themselves, though this is a good deal more complicated than Eduard Hanslick ever thought.

The second requirement for distinguishing music from nonmusic is to be found in the idea of personal involvement. It will not do just to encounter sounds in the factual world and regard them with feelings of either neutrality or irritation. These, too, are "meanings," but I discount them from the idea of musical meaning since the person interprets the sounds as simply "things" which either go unnoticed, or which irritate him against his will. Actually, this is a complicated situation, because of the variety of ways in which nonmusic may be experienced, as well as the varieties of nonmusic which may be experienced. Thus, an inhabitant of the Borneo highlands might not ever experience Dvořák's Symphony in E Minor as music. Similarly, a Caucasian child of seven, raised in North America, also might not experience this symphony as music. Yet the chances are that, for the child, the symphony is still "something like music," since the music we presume the child *has* heard is something more like the music of Dvořák's symphony than the music of Borneo. Consider, finally, a person educated within the musical traditions of Western Europe and North America: when excerpts from that symphony are performed during a half-time show at a football game, this person is very likely to feel either irritated or neutral. But his feeling this way is different from either the irritation or neutrality felt by the Bornean or the Caucasian child, because he knows that, under certain conditions, Dvořák's Symphony in E Minor *can* sound like music, but for him, a football half-time show is not one of those conditions. The purpose to which this symphony is put is no longer a primarily musical purpose, and at that moment, the symphony (or the torso thereof) is not music to our hypothetical educated person either.



There is no snobbery intended here. People can use musical compositions for any purpose they please. All I am suggesting is that there are many purposes to which musical compositions are put which succeed in completely or partially burying the music *in* the composition. Rather than blaming the content of football half-time shows on cultural atrophy, it should be recognized that people of widely varying cultures tend to treat their sacred objects in some such similar manner. Basil Davidson provides this example:

The Zande cult of ancestors is centred round shrines erected in the middle of their courtyards, and offerings are placed in these shrines on ceremonial, and sometimes other, occasions; but when not in ritual use, so to speak, Azande use them as convenient props to rest their spears against, and pay no attention to them whatsoever. The casual construction and everyday insignificance of African shrines make repeatedly the same point. What is important is not the contingent object but the immanent power which will be vested in the object on ritual occasions.<sup>3</sup>

The nonmusical experience of that part of Dvořák's symphony which was played during half-time is due, then, to its becoming a contingent object on which we are pleased to "rest our spears" when the symphony is transplanted out of its own ritual setting (which is not necessarily a concert hall, either).

The above reference to the will is important, because it is entirely possible that, as part of the musical experience, one *can* feel irritated, depressed, and the like: there is nothing particularly joyful about Berg's *Wozzeck*, for example. But it should be clear that these are experiences which one voluntarily agrees to undergo. If the feeling of oppression—a word used by Beethoven in op. 130—is not experienced as ultimately pleasurable and one which we desire to prolong, then we will never understand the difference between an experience whose object is frightful as a matter of fact, and one which is frightful because it gives us pleasure to feel that way.

It is the notion of personal involvement which lends significance to the word *ordered* in this definition of music. This word is used as a description of an experience which may be independent of, and other than, the kinds of orderings injected into the work by the composer. Once again, then, the experience of order says nothing about whether order is there in fact. Order is constituted by the experiencing person, who is just as likely to experience it in a collection of natural sounds, as in improvised music or a finely wrought fugue by J. S. Bach. Order in this

sense refers to the musical experience which is identical with itself while unfolding in time. It is order which permits us to include only certain sounds within the sphere of musical experience. The sounds of the audience coughing and scraping its feet are not part of the order of musical experience, although once again, this doesn't mean that there are no circumstances in which audience noises *can* constitute a musical experience.

Finally, this definition of music says nothing about aesthetic standards which the object of the musical experience is supposed to meet. This doesn't deny the existence of standards of compositional technique, but there is a difference between saying that a work is well or poorly made, which it is perhaps part of the business of aesthetics to say, and saying that a work of art is definable in terms of the goodness or badness of its technique. Much less can we think of standards of experience. What right have I to demand that a person experience a piece of music exactly the way I do? It is possible for a person to grow into an understanding of a piece of music, but this is not to say that the understanding itself is a standard. The experience of the musical object never exhausts the object completely, so that what I understand of a piece by Webern now may well be different from what I understand of this piece some time from now. Of course there are aspects of the object which encourage me to understand it this way rather than that, and it is these aspects which can be brought to the attention of other people for whom the understanding of the musical object is admitted to be incomplete. In this sort of intersubjective relationship, the understanding of an authority is still not what amounts to the criteria for standards. This is so because the musical experience is not a purely formal one, and its truths are not purely formal truths. In short, while the phrase "a bad composition" may make some sense, the expression "bad music" is a contradiction, while "good music" is redundant. The former is a contradiction because the behavior evoked by this situation is different from the behavior evoked by music; the latter is redundant because the experience of music includes only the experience of music. That is, if I can truthfully say that I have experienced this sound event as music, why should I argue that the experience or its object is good, since I already know?

So far, I have outlined the definition of music I will use, and have tried to show that music is not a fact or a thing in the world, but a meaning constituted by human beings. It remains for me to explain in what sense the experience of musical meanings can be described, and why they should be.

To talk about such experience in a meaningful way demands several



things. First, we have to be willing to let the composition speak to us, to let it reveal its own order and significance. An imposed order, remaining on a purely abstract level and represented by some sort of symbolic scheme, is ultimately unsatisfactory. Second, we have to be willing to question our assumptions about the nature and role of musical materials. For example, in our culture, a great deal of importance is given to the role of pitch and interval. These are considered almost primary sensory qualities, while texture, timbre, gesture, dynamics, and duration are frequently thought of as secondary, something that the pitches or intervals *have*. But is music really divided into the two realms of substance and attribute? Do we really hear *col legno* as something simply attached to the primary substance of pitch? If a French horn prolongs an open E, and then quickly mutes it, is it the same E? Logically, yes; but in terms of musical behavior, I think not. These are not idle or naive questions, since they are motivated by reflection upon current trends in music theory, from the content of fundamentals courses to more advanced applications of set theory to pitch collections. Last, and perhaps most important, we have to be ready to admit that describing a meaningful experience is itself meaningful. Why, indeed, should description be meaningful? Isn't the musical experience both complete and untranslatable? Why should my experiences be a concern of other persons, or why should theirs be a concern of mine? How can one person possibly experience, in the same way, what another person is experiencing? And isn't it true that the very act of experiencing the object changes the object itself? Even if these questions led to unsatisfactory answers, would this mean that we are now justified in assuming a nihilistic or sceptical stance?

Let me briefly suggest some reasons why description is useful, even necessary. For one thing, in describing, I engage in an act of communication with myself. This act helps to transform latent knowledge into the kind of explicit knowledge which is useful in learning about the gestures and textures of the world. Indeed, this forms a second reason why description of the musical experience is meaningful. Insofar as music is *of* the world, it teaches me *about* the world. The experience of a musical pattern may contribute to the understanding of natural patterns given by the world: "nature imitates art." Third, the uncovering of latent knowledge contributes to the growth of one's sensitivity to music. Music is nonnatural in that our bodies do not naturally know what to do with it in the same sense that our stomachs know what to do with food. If we are to learn from music, and to learn music itself, it will not do just to *have* musical experiences. We must be willing to reflect on

all the possible ramifications of these experiences. Finally, description is meaningful because it involves one in a dialogue with other people. With such dialogue, the description can be revised, supplemented, and refined, thus enlarging the domain of any single experience. This is possible because, while each person's experience is invisible to other people, they can communicate their experience through behavior: through facial or bodily expressions, language, or by paraphrasing the experience in another artistic creation, conceivably even in a different medium. The possibility of a shared experience is always there, and this possibility has been actualized throughout history by the evidence of group singing, playing, dancing, or simply listening. We learn then, not only about the self and the world, but about other people, without whose presence in the world the self would not be a self worth knowing.

The task before us, then, is the description of musical experience, and of the objects of such experience. It is not my intention here to deal with facts of music history as ends in themselves, with explanations or proofs of why such-and-such an experience is the case, with uninterpreted quanta of sense impressions, or finally, with the application of numerical, linguistic, or otherwise symbolic systems to the musical composition. These systems seem adept at legislating the validity of such experience words as *tonality*, *continuity*, or *unity* by assigning them to a purely formal universe. This seems to divert a great deal of effort away from the main problem: that of providing evidence for the validity of descriptive conclusions from the way one experiences a composition as a material entity.

#### A DEFINITION OF EXPERIENCE

I take the word *experience* to mean what the German language refers to as *Erlebnis*. As the root implies, *Erlebnis* refers to an individual living-through of some event. The other German word for experience is *Erfahrung*, which means experience-in-general. *Erlebnis* is a "first" experience, by which I mean a first-order, and not firsthand, experience. This distinction enables us to say that the *Erlebnis* of a twelve-tone composition is different from the *Erfahrung* of deducing its set. Another example of an *Erlebnis* is expressed in this well-known line: "I hate to see that evening sun go down." Now the person singing this line is apparently expressing the onset of feelings of sadness, of being downcast and blue, over an event that strictly never happens: that is, the "going down" of the sun. But for him or her, this is a lived experience, and only



a callous cosmologist would suggest to this person that the sun really doesn't rise or set, and that the night sky really isn't moody. The point is that what I know about a piece of music as fact may play an insignificant role, or none at all, in the way I experience that piece. For this reason, the *Erlebnis* kind of experience is selected here as an approach to an elemental (though not elementary) realm of experience. Perceptual experience is irreplaceable as an opening to this realm, but it enjoys this status only because the objects of perceptual experience are not purely private objects. To speak more correctly, I should perhaps say that no judgment is made at all about whether these objects are private or public, since to make such a judgment is already to presuppose a dichotomy between object and subject which philosophers long ago succeeded in dissolving. An example will clarify this stance.

A person hears a certain musical event as "ascending." This will be the case whether he perceives the ascending event in a real performance, or whether he imagines a musical event as ascending. Or he may have remembered that the concert he attended yesterday included an event of an ascending nature. Where shall we localize this ascending event: inside, or outside us? Is the object of my perception outside me? If it is, why am I so deeply touched by it? If it isn't, why is it that other people can experience the same thing? Do I experience the ascending event as "out there," and a feeling which is "in here"? Isn't it rather the case that the ascending event and the feeling conspire to constitute a single meaning, and that the self and the event merge in the formation of a single locus? When I imagine, remember, or even dream of ascending events, do I find within myself anything which is not already in and of the world? R. D. Laing suggests that there is, therefore, no sense in maintaining the distinction between inner experience and outward behavior. Perceiving, imagining, remembering, and dreaming are, instead, "modalities of experience," none of which is any more "in" or "out" than any other.<sup>4</sup> I see, hear, and touch objects because I am in the world, and have eyes, ears, and a body. But then these objects become objects-for-me. The subject without an object to experience, and an object without a subject for whom it has a meaning, are both unthinkable situations.

#### THE OBJECT OF PHENOMENOLOGICAL DESCRIPTION

By this time, one might have the impression that I am attempting to sanctify an extreme relativism. Indeed, it is precisely the "subjective"

aspect of experience which lured many writers earlier in this century down the path of sheer opinion-mongering. Later on this trend was reversed by a renewed interest in "objective," scientific, or otherwise nonintrospective musical analysis. But we have good reason to believe that a musical experience is not a purely private thing, like seeing pink elephants, and that reporting about such an experience need not be subjective in the sense of it being a mere matter of opinion. Similarly, we have good reason to believe that while both art and science contribute to knowledge about ourselves and the world, it will not do to pursue the objects of the one with the methods of the other, or to talk about the one with the other's vocabulary. So we shall have to locate the musical object somewhere between the opinion and the fact, and between the illusion and the theorem. We call both the musical object, and its experience, "phenomena," and the activity of describing phenomena is called "phenomenology."

But not just any description is phenomenological description. A phenomenological description concentrates not on facts, but upon essences, and attempts to uncover what there is about an object and its experience which is essential (or necessary) if the object or the experience is to be recognized at all. And since the appearance or non-appearance of music is not dependent upon a set of factual circumstances, it seems clear that musical essences lie within the realm of value and meaning.

Thus, one of the most important distinctions between ordinary description and phenomenological description is that the latter describes those aspects of experience which are given in the experience, but which are not reducible to any single experience. It would be strange indeed to think of a piece of music coming into being the moment I become sensually aware of it, only to pass into nonbeing when I turn away. Whatever meaning is attached to a Mozart sonata, for example, transcends any particular appearance of that sonata, since its meaning as a sonata by Mozart is independent of its appearances. If this were not the case, it would be impossible to say that any particular performance was too clumsy, too slow, too flashy, etc. In order for anyone to say this, he must have an idea about what the sonata means, whatever the conditions of an actual performance might be. These conditions can cover up the sonata's essence, either by bad performances or inappropriate settings (for example, using it as background "music" in a supermarket). Under these circumstances, it is indeed true that what we are hearing is not Mozart. Or other circumstances can bring out the sonata's essence: those



involving the submission of the performer to the music, his recognition of its essences, and his ability to bring them out. In both cases, these essences were neither destroyed nor created by the various circumstances just described. The sonata which was mutilated last week by some inept performer is the same one that provided a totally musical experience yesterday. The problem for phenomenological description is to elucidate those essences which make the musical experience possible, and which distinguish a musical experience from a nonmusical one. But if these essences may or may not be given in factual circumstances, then they themselves are not contingent on these circumstances. Indeed, phenomenology argues that essences are not contingent, but simultaneously necessary and available for questioning.

I now take up a few simple examples designed to illustrate how a phenomenologist might interpret the world (including the world of music). Where relevant, I will compare this interpretation to the way other modes of thought approach the same subject. The intention here is twofold: to introduce the manner of behavior permeating this book, and to suggest how this behavior differs from other modes of thought, while not necessarily being totally unfamiliar. The basic question is, What is there about phenomenology that should interest a musician? What's in it for him?

Two examples have already been given. Music has been defined as a certain reciprocal relation established between a person, his behavior, and a sounding object. Generalizing on this statement brings us to the realization that an interpretation of the world is inadequate if it does not consider the role of the interpreter. Even in the natural sciences, the notion of objectivity has been revised to include this reciprocity between observer and observed. It is for this reason, too, that I suggested the impracticality of adhering to objective criteria of aesthetic value. These criteria spring from a personal judgment, which itself presupposes an attitude toward what is judged. For the moment, then, we can translate the reciprocity of observer and observed to mean that certain observable features of the musical object are valuable because they are desired by the observer. This is quite different from the pedantic and patronizing attitude which suggests that because certain works of art are valued along established lines of "objective" criteria, we should desire them. But let us develop the implications of this reciprocity a bit further, with the following examples.

According to basic rules of plane geometry, the figure below can be proven to be an equilateral triangle:



In other words, it can be logically demonstrated that the figure is such a triangle and not an isosceles triangle, a square, or a circle. Now this figure can also be phenomenally experienced as an equilateral triangle, but in addition, as (1) an arrow pointing in any of three directions; (2) a figure pointing in three directions at once; (3) a spatial figure of a point in a background growing into a plane surface whose edge is visible in the foreground; and (4) the same planar figure receding into a point. From this, we can gather that a phenomenon is different from an uninterpreted sensation (a black mark on a white surface), and from a mere fact. I have not just pointed out four facts about that triangle, but four *meanings*. When I look at the figure and see a left-pointing arrow, this is what the figure means. There is nothing in the figure which demands that it be exclusively interpreted this way; I am free to perceive it in several other ways. Nevertheless, my freedom is not total. I am, at any rate, less free to perceive it as a right-pointing arrow. In fact, I am free to perceive this figure in any of several ways only because my freedom is circumscribed by my past experiences and acquisitions of the world. I presume that this statement will not be translated as implying that I am only a product of a conditioning environment, and that the experience of freedom is an illusion. It does imply, once again, that a phenomenon is something that can be meant in many ways, depending on one's educational, social, and cultural environment.

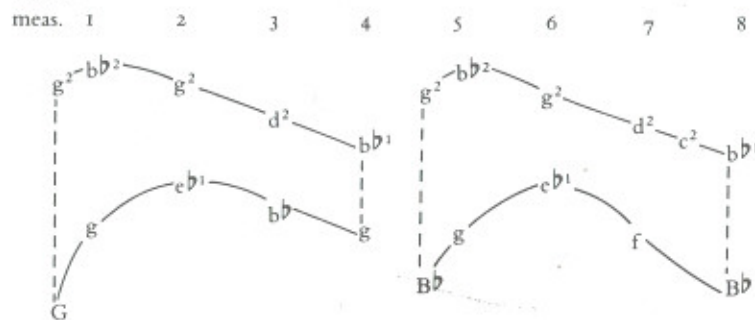
An analogous example in music can easily be supplied. (See ex. 1.1.) It is immediately evident that we cannot interpret the music in this excerpt simply by attending to what is visibly there (again, black marks on a white surface). Nor do we experience the example aurally as a discrete succession of points of sound. If we did, we could not experience its rhythm, motion, form, direction, or its degrees of relative stability and instability. This clearly means that the piece is irreducible: it is incapable of being broken up into the separate pitch atoms that went into its construction. Unlike the scientific approach to physical matter, which strives for certitude about the definition of matter by studying the levels of atomic and subatomic particles, the musician cannot grope among the individual pitches of a composition, interpreting them simply as pitches, to arrive at statements about the composition which seem either logically necessary or experientially relevant. Pitches have a way of



Example 1.1. Bach: English Suite no. 3 in G Minor, Gavotte, meas. 1-8

becoming absorbed in the stream of musical processes, which is why it is comparatively easier to describe what these processes are, than to describe what the pitches are—a pedagogical truism apparently lost on the promoters of melodic and harmonic dictation.

Listening to this gavotte, we can ask how we are conscious of it. What does its stream of musical processes present? An initial perception is that of a definite form created by two melodic lines moving energetically in time, clearly punctuated at regular intervals. The top edge of the form (the upper voice) consists of two generally descending motions, while the bottom edge (the lower voice) presents a more arched or convex shape:<sup>5</sup>



Example 1.2a. Bach: English Suite no. 3 in G Minor, Gavotte



Example 1.2b. Bach: English Suite no. 3 in G Minor, Gavotte



Example 1.3a. Bach: English Suite no. 3 in G Minor, Gavotte



Example 1.3b. Bach: English Suite no. 3 in G Minor, Gavotte

A background to both these shapes is provided by the change in mode from minor to major, suggesting that the mode of a key is quite different from the surface appearance of major or minor chords. The mode is their setting: it is what these chords are *in*, and the setting itself can change. In the gavotte, minor shades into major beginning at measure 6. A more constant, and different, background, is provided by the awareness that this excerpt is part of an individual piece which itself is part of a larger composition called a suite. This sort of background actually has two axes: along one axis, one can continue by saying that the suite is part of the total output of keyboard compositions by Bach, and that these are part of all his compositions, etc.; along the other axis, one can compare this gavotte to all the other gavottes ever written, which is the direction implicitly taken when one attempts to decide if, and how, Bach's dance music is stylized.

It was mentioned that the shape of the first two phrases was similar. More importantly, however, one must hear the dissimilarity of the second phrase as it strengthens the stability of b-flat as a point of arrival. These and other aspects of the piece form the immediate focal point of my field of consciousness as I hear the piece unfolding. Nearer to the fringes of consciousness is the awareness that it contains more than two voices: while it may consist of two *parts*, as many as four voices can be formed from the convolutions of its surface melodies. One also realizes that accent plays a minimal role in determining the basic shape of the upper-voice melody. For instance, the two upbeats both consist of the ascending line shown in example 1.2a. Similarly, the downbeat a<sup>2</sup> in



measure 7 covers the more structural leap of a seventh over the bar from  $c^1$  to  $b\text{-flat}^2$  (ex. 1.2b). Now other nuances begin appearing. The first part of the lower-voice shape in measure 2 can be heard as containing within itself the dotted rhythm of the upper voice in measure 6 (ex. 1.3a). Finally, the penultimate measure turns out to be the most rhythmically complex, since its surface details cover an implicit syncopation (ex. 1.3b).

Going back to my initial perception of the form as "two melodic lines moving energetically in time," I find upon reflection that it is not accurately stated. Actually, it is time which is unfolding in the music. In the connection of one event with another, I effect a temporal process which begins and ends with the suite itself, which thus forms a kind of parenthesis in world time. Similarly, I recognize that this music possesses a space, since I indubitably hear an overall descending motion in the upper voice, and if we talk about motion from higher to lower, we are talking about musical space. Further reflection suggests that the location of the feeling of "energetic" motion is not primarily in me but in the music itself. Like space and time, this feeling is part of the subject matter of the piece: it is what the piece is about. It is not a matter of projecting my feelings into the piece. If the experience of "energetic" were merely a projection of an idiosyncratic act, what would be the grounds for a possible disagreement that "energetic" is a suitably descriptive word, since any other word would be similarly idiosyncratic? I agree that "energetic" is my *choice*, but choosing a word descriptive of a feeling, and projecting that feeling, are two different activities. I can usually differentiate the two because choosing is a conscious act, and includes the awareness that any descriptive term is necessarily an approximation. It is the choice which is open to further discussion and criticism. However, there is less room for doubting that there is something about the piece itself which presents a feeling of some kind, which is described here as "energetic." It is for this reason that I suggest that feeling, like space and time, is a necessary constituent of the musical experience rather than a psychological by-product of the listener. In other words, I am suggesting that a necessary feeling-with, or attunement, is essential if one is actually to live the music rather than merely to observe it.

Implicit in everything discussed so far is an important distinction between a phenomenological and an empirical interpretation of experience. Actually, it is difficult to approach music from an empirical standpoint because, if one takes the theory literally, it would be impossible to distinguish the music in the sound from the sound itself, since

only the latter is there as a matter of fact. Strict empiricism concerns itself either with physically existing individuals or with an interpretation of perception based on sense data or sense impressions. Such a theory formulates a restricted definition of experience, since it chooses not to account for memory, anticipation, feeling, values, or a host of other nonphysical and nonsensory constituents of experience. More importantly, the logical structure of empiricism is inconsistent with itself: it offers no explanation of how any kind of theory, even an empirical one, can account for itself, since a theory is a mental construct rather than a physically evident thing. And even if the theory were to be put down on paper for all to see, empiricism could still not acknowledge the inference which makes the marks on the paper the translation of mental acts. Nor could empiricism account for the motivation, judgment, hopes, and fears which accompanied the publication of the theory. Finally, since empiricism locks all sense data within the private person, there is no way for me to find out anything about your sense data, or for you about mine, and for either of us to confirm that our respective sense data refer to a single manifestation, namely, the music we are listening to.

Finally, this brief description of the relatively simple gestures of Bach's G minor gavotte was intended to convey the idea that phenomenological description accepts not only the reciprocity between observer and observed mentioned earlier, but the interconnectedness of knowledge and perception. I *know* something about music, therefore I can perceive *this* music. Whatever else they are, phenomenological essences are not the result of an unbalanced emphasis on either abstract concepts or unreflective, undisciplined feelings. The relation between an essence, studied reflectively, and its presentation in some individual experience involving knowing, feeling, and judging, is one of the basic dialectics of phenomenology. It is fitting to close this chapter, then, with some further remarks about essences and their relation to the particular composition discussed above.

One of the most distinctive features of an essence has already been intimated: one experiences essences in individuals only to the extent that something more than just the individual is experienced. The few remarks made here about the spatiality, the time, the movement, and the mood of the G minor gavotte can also be made about other pieces. That is, other pieces may reveal forms of space, time, etc., which are different from the essential forms of the gavotte, but what seems to remain as a purely logical requirement is that any possible music must unfold



temporal and spatial forms of *some* kind. We can think, therefore, of such essences as space and time as being *presented* in this example. Such essences cannot be locked within any single presentation and still maintain their status as essences. Conversely, it would not be possible to recognize this gavotte as a "piece" of music unless we had some prior notion of time, movement, space, feeling, etc.—essences which can be presented not only within the world of music but also as delineations of the human world in general.

In speaking of essences, there is no abstractive, inductive process taking place. I do not leave the gavotte behind in order to launch into a study of space-in-general; I do not move from its given sensuousness to the mathematical formula which could generate it. Rather, I find my experience composed of a dialogue between the general and the particular, such that the general is given in the particular, while the particular is identified precisely by its general qualities. What does happen is that I begin concentrating on the gavotte itself: not this or that performance of it, but that which remains the same whether I am experiencing it now, remembering it, anticipating it, or judging it.

And yet this is not an invitation to treat the piece as an ideal object and predicate all manner of statements of it. In concentrating on essences one does not exclude the experience of the object embodying those essences. Indeed, it is only through experiencing the object that it can be known at all. In this sense, it is the object itself which tells us which essences are appropriate to it. The gavotte is not a mental or ideal construct on my part (other people can experience the same piece), and I observe that its significance, its meaning for me, its essences, emanate from it. They are not imposed onto it. So it is important to realize that, in focusing on the gavotte rather than on any *de facto* performance of it, I do not transform it into some ethereal fiction which I feel justified in shaping to fit my theory of it.

All of this behavior differs from certain psychological interpretations which are apt to be expressed in such remarks as "It's all in the mind," "We're all conditioned to hear it that way," or "Our responses are just subjective addenda, and should be put aside when analyzing the music." The problem here is that, if these interpretations are true, they must then apply to the standpoint of the person making them. *His* standpoint is then likewise conditioned, subjective, and locked within his mind. Under these circumstances, we arrive at a body of interpretations all equally good, being similarly conditioned, and all equally incommunicable, being formulated not only *by* a subject but purely *within* a

subject. We would then be left with no reason to argue about whether the gavotte is describable as "energetic," "tonal," "in a minor key," "displaying lively motions and well-defined forms," etc., since there would be no truth toward which all these descriptions could aspire. But one thing that phenomenology does very well is to provoke arguments. And the very fact that we can argue over a description indicates that there is a truth toward which our reasoned opinions tend. This dynamism between truth as a goal and experience as an opening to that goal, between individual presentations and general essences, and between reflection and the unreflective, *Erlebnis* level of experience, is what makes phenomenology a fascinating, though admittedly difficult, study in its own right. Its descriptions are not founded on the concept of a relativized truth, but on a truth that is relational: the meaning of the gavotte demands the presence of both the gavotte itself and an attentive listener. The world as the object of lived experience, and the subject placed in that world, are definable only insofar as the one is present to the other.

Finally, it is also important to note that I am not actually denying the validity of other interpretations which suggest that the gavotte is a mental construct, etc. I neither deny these interpretations nor affirm them. It is rather the case that I choose to make no use of them. I neutralize any role they play in determining its status. It is as yet too soon to ask such questions as, Is the gavotte (1) a work of art, (2) a keyboard study, (3) a psychological stimulus, (4) an illusion, (5) an idealistic construct, (6) a forgery, or (7) a cryptogram? A premature question about the aesthetic or existential status of the gavotte can only suggest a premature answer. A properly conducted phenomenological inquiry strives to avoid such prejudices as come in the form of premature answers, uncritically accepted beliefs, or wishful thinking.

Pursuant upon this, it would be wrong to assume that this chapter provides anything like complete answers to the nature either of Bach's G minor gavotte, or of phenomenology itself. Rather, it has raised questions, many of which will probably remain inadequately answered when this particular study is finished. But there is nothing wrong with that. Philosophical behavior, in simplest terms, is wondering about the self and the world. The answers, perhaps, are only as important as the questions: What is a musical experience? Can musical feeling be adequately described? What is the relation between thinking, feeling, and willing? Is it possible to approach the musical object completely free of prejudices and presuppositions? Can we talk systematically about



musical uniqueness? Is there a finite number of musical essences? Can we apply levels of gradations within this number, so that terms like "essential" and "necessary" can be distinguished from universal requiredness? How can description be prevented from degenerating to the level of anecdote, reminiscence, or idle opinion? Can we describe systematically without first setting forth a System? There is, of course, a method behind this venture, but as was mentioned in the preface, I have chosen to illustrate it obliquely, by maintaining a phenomenological attitude within the descriptive work of the later chapters. "Doing" phenomenology has been found to be more helpful than writing yet another manifesto about it.

## 2: The Nature of Phenomena and Phenomenological Description

Etymologically, a phenomenon is anything that appears to consciousness, or more simply, anything of which one is conscious. The specifically phenomenological interpretation of a phenomenon is that its essences are manifested in its appearances; that is to say, appearances are appearances of essences. This does not mean that essences are obviously or blatantly given. Nor do the two terms *appearance* and *essence* imply anything one way or the other about whether these appearances or essences really exist. Examples of phenomena are "chair," "anger," "green Martian," " $\sqrt{-1}$ ," "myself," "melody," etc. Thus, it can quickly be seen that the notion of a phenomenon cuts across the different existential categories just exemplified. It is also seen that the phenomenological notion of appearance is much larger than the narrower domain of whatever is accessible to the senses. Finally, it should be clear that I am writing as a phenomenologist interested in uncovering *some* essences rather than *the* essence of any musical event. It will be more practical to try to find out something about *a* main point of a piece of music rather than *the* main point.

Trying to discover what is phenomenal, or essential, about a musical event is difficult because of the sedimentation of learning that covers the basic stratum of intuitive self-givenness. A central consideration for a phenomenological description of music is the problem of redirecting this acquired layer back toward the basic stratum, so that both can be better understood. I am not advocating that the sensitive musician throw his training overboard like unwanted ballast: this is simply not possible. Rather, I am suggesting that, as listeners, what counts as lived musical experiences are such intuited essences as the grace of a minuet by Mozart, the drama of a symphony by Mahler, or the agony of Coltrane's jazz. If we hear the music at all, it is because we hear the grace, the drama, and the agony as essential constituents of, and irreducibly given in, the music itself. It is not even accurate enough to say that these constituents are what the music is *about*: rather, they *are* the music. Or again, the two expressions are simply equivalent. What the music says is what it is. But this is only stating the problem, which is apparently still rather fresh in the debates of music theorists, aestheticians, and psychologists. I will

therefore continue the description of musical phenomena along the lines raised by the following questions: How does the vocabulary of traditional music theory imply (or hide) the stratum of intuitive awareness? Am I actually going to revive the pathetic fallacy? Are "grace," drama, etc., only mental constructs?

### PHENOMENOLOGY AND MUSIC THEORY

The term *music theory* is used here to cover the entire range of its field from instruction in fundamentals of music to its more legitimate application to speculative thought, the forming of hypotheses, and the construction of systems or models. However, in this space I will limit the description of phenomena to theoretical concepts which I presume to be the common property of every musician. For example, I have already suggested that a fairly common interpretation of pitch is as an irreducible atom in the musical universe. In his preface to *The Structure of Atonal Music*, Forte writes that "... one can deal with pitch and disregard orchestration, but the reverse is not, in general, possible."<sup>1</sup> Thus, the interpretation of what is irreducible will differ with differing methodologies. From an acoustical point of view, pitch is not a basic stratum, being a function of duration and loudness. From a phenomenological point of view, pitch is also not a basic stratum, for two reasons. Pitch is obviously not a basic stratum in the sense that music itself is dependent on discriminable and specifiable frequencies. We could then not account for the roles played by pitchless drums, cymbals, wood blocks, and sirens, not to mention the repertoire of electronic and "found" sounds. More importantly, pitch is "transparentized" in a musical context, which is to say that we experience music *through* the pitch, rather than the pitch itself. More simply, we hear the musical activity of the pitch: it is receding, projecting, emerging, interrupting or being interrupted, changing in tone quality or intensity, glaring, glowing, echoing, etc. The most mysterious thing about a pitch is that it simultaneously presents the experiences of duration and change: the "same" sound constantly renews itself and passes away, even while enduring. In this sense, the phenomenal aspect of pitch is some kind of activity, however minimal, and is therefore involved in the presentation of some kind of time and space, although it may be of a highly undifferentiated kind. We can think of pitch in music as analogous to cadmium red in painting; again, pitch is to music what Paul Scofield is to King Lear, and in general, what a performer is to a performance. Pitch is not even to be



Example 2.1. Beethoven: Grosse Fuge op. 133, from the fugue subject

confused as the reason for, or cause of, the musical event: it is simply the medium. When we talk of a "line of arpeggiated pitches" (as in Bach's gavotte), we are actually employing a shorthand style of language which, more fully developed, would no doubt mention such activities as "a gradually descending line which, as it moves, also changes its states of tension, eventually coming to a temporary rest on a definite level in musical space. The rhythm and specific shapes of this line not only conspire to create a certain thickness in the overall shape, but also collaborate in the creation of temporal levels due to the presentation of changing events *within* enduring events...."

Much the same can be said of the notion of interval, also regarded as a basic musical constituent, and frequently defined as the space between two pitches.<sup>2</sup> But this definition tends to ignore particular situations in favor of general concepts. Furthermore, in order to designate a space which is "between" two pitches, this definition presupposes that the pitches must first be related to each other in a way which makes betweenness phenomenally significant. It may be that one way two pitches can be related is to experience a meaningful space between them, but when this happens, other factors are also at work: tone quality, membership in the same Gestalt, or a shared function or purpose. In example 2.1 the experience of interval seems to be more pronounced between  $f^2$  and  $a\text{-flat}^2$ , than between  $d^1$  and  $f^2$ . The fact that the latter is a tenth, and, indeed, a compound form of the former (and therefore, in some magical way equivalent to it), is to my ears not the most significant—the most phenomenal—report that one can make about the melodic identity of this subject.

To the extent that  $d^1$  is heard as a pitch at all, it is heard on a spatial level separate from the following  $f^2$ , and forms a stronger bond with the nonconsecutive  $c\text{-flat}^1$  appearing three measures later. But we can question not only the significance of identifying the pitches and intervals we hear, but also whether the phenomenon being presented is experienced, and explicable, as pitches or intervals at all. To be sure,  $d^1$  and  $f^2$  present a relationship, but it does not seem to be primarily an intervallic one. The primary phenomenon, it seems to me, is gestural,



with  $d^1$  and  $f^2$  marking the beginning and terminal points of a vigorous, upswinging gesture. But to try to define precisely the locus of this gesture by reducing it to a certain interval is to turn away from the phenomenon. Rather, we have, once again, a case of transparentizing, where the interval gives up its identity to become absorbed in the gestural onslaught of the fugue.

A more insidious presupposition about intervallic nomenclature is that it frequently implies the presence of other tones inside the space of the boundary tones. Thus, a "minor third" assumes the presence of at least one tone between its boundaries; an "octave" presupposes a diapason divisible by eight; or an "interval-class 12" presupposes the existence of twelve tones within a diapason. But when I hear an "octave," I hear nothing so complicated as "a diapason divisible by eight." I do not even hear a diapason (division or multiplication of a frequency by two). I hear a form of musical space, experienced either as a thickening of a single line (as in the texture known as "octave runs"), or as the stratification of an otherwise undifferentiated space (as in the opening bars to Mahler's First Symphony).

Evidently, the problem of a descriptive vocabulary is making itself felt. It is not only the phenomenologist who experiences a conflict between musical ethics and linguistic economy. This is a difficulty which cannot be overcome; all one can do is intend to use words like pitch and interval only when they are experienced as phenomena (not facts), while remaining aware that even description of phenomena is not equivalent to translation. (The description can aid aural experience, but not replace it.) A useful thing to remember is that the description of how these theoretical concepts are significant as *Erlebnisse* must be carried out in terms which occupy a different (I hope more fundamental) level than the level on which we find such expressions as "minor third." What makes a minor third not only significant but possible, obviously cannot be discovered by referring to other intervals. In other words, the notion of "minor third" is a contingent case of—what? If we try to talk about intervals with statements which, if true, are self-evidently true, being given in direct experience, then this "what" cannot itself be contingent. This is why I refer to such essentials as time, space, motion, form, and tone quality, since by no stretch of my imagination can I conceive of any music, and hence of any interval, which does not involve at least these constituents.

The problem of descriptive vocabulary becomes even more acute when one speaks of harmony. We already know enough to distinguish chords from harmony. The difference between these two is the dif-

ference between ornament and structure. Implicit in this difference is the notion that harmony is essentially related to the phenomenon of consonance. But the path toward the phenomenon of harmony leads away from any acoustical interpretation of consonance, while enlarging the domain of what is experientially consonant. Consonance as "sounding-with" implies a homogeneity of space which absorbs individual pitches and intervals. It seems that a cadential  $\frac{6-5}{4-3}$  motion involves a move

from functional dissonance to consonance, because the  $\frac{6}{4}$  displaces the  $\frac{5}{3}$  not only in time but also in space. The presentation of the  $\frac{6}{4}$  is heard as a projection of tones from the harmonic environment of the dominant function. This projection, or outward-bound motion, in presenting a certain instability, is counteracted by the pull of the harmonic environment itself. The result is the tension we call dissonance. Strangely enough, the presence of dynamic accent need not play a necessary role in our experience of this kind of tension, although, as we know, the accented  $\frac{6-5}{4-3}$  cadential motion has become a cliché in triadic tonal music. A particularly stunning example of a  $\frac{6-5}{4-3}$  motion which avoids both cliché and dynamic accent is shown below, in the cadenzalike passage of Chopin's Nocturne no. 17 (ex. 2.2).



Example 2.2. Chopin: Nocturne no. 17 in B Major, op. 62 no. 1, meas. 76-81



As indicated above, only one harmony functions "behind" and through the span of measures 77 to 80. The instability of the  $\frac{6}{4}$  suspension is not created by an initial dynamic accent but by a growth in tension, a swelling of melodic space, and a thickening of texture, all culminating on a-sharp<sup>2</sup> in measure 79: a final striving before falling into the tonic, which then maintains its grip on the piece to the very end. What I have described as growth, striving, culmination, and falling is what I suggest happens on a level in front of the relatively more stable dominant. (It is important to remember here that while the discussion of dimensional thickness implies a foreground-middleground relationship, it does not necessarily follow that such relationships lie only within Schenker's theory of structural levels. On the contrary, the latter resides within the general notions of spatial level and dimension, which transcend any contingent compositional style.)

It should not be inferred that this description of harmony as middle-ground consonance refers only to consonant triads. Once again, careful listening suggests that consonance itself is perceived as spatial homogeneity, quite apart from the number of tones comprising the consonance. Tones are harmonious with other tones because of their location within, and adherence to, a common space. The closing sonority to Mahler's *Das Lied von der Erde* (ex. 2.3) sounds harmonious because its members C-E-G-A not only sound within the same space, but are also "inner-directed," or adhesive to one another. From the points of view of both text and music, all striving and projecting has ceased. For this reason (among many others), it would be unwise to regard A as an "added sixth," since this expression indicates a mode of thinking which separates A from the C triad, whereas A is *not* heard as added to or disengaged from the texture, but as an indispensable constituent of it.

A much more radical example of phenomenal consonance is the excerpt from Carter's Piano Concerto shown in example 2.4. Here, the strings present a thick, opaque band or wall of sound which offers a different instance of spatial homogeneity. Dissonance is experienced as the confrontation of this wall with the piano sounds which seem to bounce off it.

In sum, this sketchy treatment of the phenomenon of harmony suggests that it may be quite different from what centuries of tradition have led us to believe. To be sure, Western music of the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries has associated consonance with triadic structures and certain kinds of syntactic functions. All I am saying is that the essence of

gänzlich ersterbend

69

Fl. I

Obo. I

Clar. in F

Bsn.

Trp.

Hr.

Ctr.

Mandol.

Arpa I

Arpa II

Straltrio

gänzlich ersterbend

69

Vl. I

Vl. II

Vla.

Vc.

Vi.

Cb.

Example 2.3. Mahler: *Das Lied von der Erde*, VI, closing measures. Copyright 1897 by Universal Edition, A. G., Vienna. Copyright renewed. Assigned to Universal Edition (London) Ltd., London. Used by permission of European American Music Distributors Corp.



[illegible]



**CONCERTINO**

**Br 2**  
C Br

**Hrs 2**

**Timp**  
1  
2

**Fl. I.**

**E. H.**

**B. Cl.**

**Piano**  
ppp ma ben sentito

**Vln**  
ppp sempre

**Vla**  
ppp sempre

**Vc**  
ppp sempre  
(suoni reali sempre)

**Co.**  
ppp sempre

**I.**  
2a, 3a, 4a, 5a, 6a, 7a, 8a, 9a, 10a, 11a, 12a  
ppp sempre

**VLNS**  
I.  
II.  
2a, 3a, 4a, 5a, 6a, 7a, 8a, 9a, 10a, 11a, 12a  
ppp sempre

**VLAS**  
I.  
II.  
2a, 3a, 4a, 5a, 6a, 7a, 8a, 9a, 10a, 11a, 12a  
ppp sempre

**VCS**  
I.  
II.  
2a, 3a, 4a, 5a, 6a, 7a, 8a, 9a, 10a, 11a, 12a  
ppp sempre

**CBS**  
I.  
II.  
2a, 3a, 4a, 5a, 6a, 7a, 8a, 9a, 10a, 11a, 12a  
ppp sempre

**1a, 2a, 3a, 4a, 5a, 6a, 7a, 8a, 9a, 10a, 11a, 12a**