

translations *

On the Spiritual in Music

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INTRODUCTION

Why should I presume to talk about music? I lack the skill of the musician, as well as the knowledge of the musicologist. I am therefore incapable of taking part in theoretical and critical discussions about music. I can discuss neither the origin of a piece of music nor its correct interpretation.

What remains to be said, then, if I omit everything that forms the basis of discussions by musicians and musicologists? The title of this essay provides the answer: the spiritual. Let us consider whether music, that is to say, music generally heard in concerts, has a spiritual meaning. We should consider whether the listener experiences more than an individual enchantment of the soul, more than admiration and joy at the technical virtuosity of the performing artists, more than a social pastime.

However important the emotional impact of the music, however pleasurable the sensual joy of sound and the expert appreciation of the interpreters, however delightful the festive pomp, all this would not account for the efforts of a community to establish and organize music festivals.¹ They belong to the realm of public events, even though they are organized by private citizens and can exist mainly because of private support.

What makes the cultivation of music and every other art an important task is their *spiritual message, which rises above the individual*. The dictators of our century realized their power by preventing artists from creating freely and by banning “degenerate” art in the Third Reich and “bourgeois, decadent” art in the communist countries. This suppression was not only limited to the communications of literature and the visual arts, which are accessible to the understanding, but also included, to an even greater extent, those artistic creations whose messages could not be comprehended conceptually. Contemporary works of music were no less suspect or undesirable politically than the works of poets and pictorial artists.

This gives us sufficient grounds, and indeed makes it our duty, to consider how rationally incomprehensible works of art can succeed in troubling the mentality of dictators, for such considerations lead us to the conviction that the arts convey significant pronouncements of the human spirit.

THE SPIRITUAL CREATION

Musical compositions are created by the human mind. They can be classified as works of the spirit. One must explore their essence in order to grasp their character. I beg the reader not to become impatient if we make a long and laborious detour instead of an entertaining one in search of these works of music. I am following the thoughts of Nicolai Hartmann, which are specifically expounded in his *Aesthetik* and *Vom Sein des menschlichen Geistes*. That does not mean, however, that I am taking over his realistic ontology in general. I believe that his teaching is founded upon, complemented, and modified by the phenomenology of Edmund Husserl. I shall not dwell on this point any further, as this paper does not aim to explain philosophical doctrines and methods but rather to elucidate the spirit of music. I mention Hartmann and Husserl only to show the origin of the ideas expounded here.

Works of the spirit comprise all statements of the human mind. As a rule, we accept them without thinking about their evolution, origin, and effect. We see and hear the messages of thinkers and artists and hardly ever ask ourselves how they are made possible. The structure of the inanimate world and the enigma of nonhuman nature interest us more than the spiritual being of Man. We accept this with a naïve certainty and gloss over the problems. To be sure, many people are also interested in emotional life. Psychology, which is concerned with the state of the soul, both conscious and unconscious, awake and dreaming, has numerous partisans, both professional and amateur. But they do not enter that sphere of the human mind which we are exploring here. Neither can we gather in the richness of the spiritual being and plumb its depths. Our only object is the phenomenon of the spiritual creation. The word phenomenon is used here in the philosophical, technical sense. It does not signify a mere general and indeterminate object of discussion. No—our aim is to explore the work of the spirit as it appears in your consciousness, and mine.

But how does it appear? One mind cannot transmit messages directly to another. The mind that expresses itself must lay down its communication in symbols which can be perceived by our senses. The scientist expresses his subject in words, numbers, or formulas and occasionally illustrates them pictorially. The writer shapes the spiritual content into words and sentences, the composer into notes and other symbols. These physically perceivable carriers of spiritual communication can be visual or acoustic (written, spoken, or sounding in tones); they are rarely intended for the sense of touch. Spiritual communication always triumphs over sensory perception. The man who creates with his mind, whether he be an artist or a scholar, first visualizes or hears the creation in his spirit. He sees or hears it—this must be stressed. He shapes the spiritual content as such in his mind and makes it perceptible visually or acoustically by putting ink on paper, by moving a pencil or brush over a surface, by working on a stone with a chisel, by making the air vibrate through the spoken word or sound-generating media. The mind, which has

been made accessible to sensory perception by physical means or, to use copyright terminology, has been materialized, is detached from the mind of its creator, is made *objective*. This autonomous spirit is the spiritual work. It exists independently of its creator, even thousands of years after his death. But it does not exist as a material object in itself. As such, only the physical carrier exists, for example, a painting on canvas, ink on paper, chiseled stone, a recording, and so on. The spiritual creation, which is embodied in the object, exists only for the receiving spirit. That is to say, everything that takes place in the mind of the creator is renewed through another human mind, which perceives the symbols that belong to the physical world in its consciousness, and this receiving mind transposes the symbols into the spiritual creation. It achieves this by going in reverse—not, like the creator, from the spiritual vision or hearing to the physical product, but from the latter to the spiritual creation.

Thus, the spiritual exists first in the mind of its creator and, afterwards, again in the minds of all who perceive it. In this way it can exist in a limitless number of places and in different eras, in the spirit of the creator as well as in the spirit of the receiver for whom it was created.

AESTHETIC CREATIONS AND CREATIONS OF THE UNDERSTANDING

The distinction between aesthetic creations, on the one hand, and the creations of the understanding, on the other, is of fundamental importance to our subject. The spirit which concerns us here manifests itself in different ways in both categories. *Works of the understanding* are those which communicate knowledge. They contain a message which has been transmitted by the signs in which the work of the understanding has been fixed, but which does not appear directly in consciousness via these signs. The perception of the signs is followed by reflection, and knowledge is conveyed only through the latter. The signs are symbols of thoughts and their connections. The scientist, who reveals a mathematical, scientific, or intellectual perception, does not see or hear it directly. It does not appear in his mind as an independent visual or acoustic shape. The signs which are visually and acoustically perceptible (words, numbers, drawings, etc.) are accurate indications of their spiritual contents. They are comprehensible only in the context of their broader sense.

This holds true also for numbers and formulas, of course. Their function is only to indicate. It is different as far as words, sentences, and pictures are concerned. They offer an immediate statement and can also be carriers for the communication of knowledge. Words such as reason, creation, communication carrier, science, etc., are concepts whose contents become evident only upon further reflection. But words, sentences, and images can also transmit the creation of the spirit directly and at the same time reveal a message to the understanding. This is the way poets communicate, insofar as their works include a message that can be grasped by the understanding (for example,

when Hölderlin says, "The impatient word always rushes ahead of mortal man and does not permit the hour of success to mature untouched."). The receptive spirit sees how the word hastens and experiences how the hand grasps too quickly for the result.

It is often hard to draw the line between the creation of the understanding and the aesthetic work. But it is not necessary for us at this point to recognize its course, as works of music are always aesthetic. The concept of aesthetic, in this connection, signifies only the way in which the spiritual creation manifests itself. It does not make a statement about the experience of the person who perceives it. It is unimportant whether this person experiences it as beautiful, agreeable, or repugnant, or whether he feels any sensation at all.

Any creation that is directly experienced by the mind, independently of the reflection of the understanding, is aesthetic. As soon as a person sees or hears an aesthetic creation, he experiences a visual, spiritual image or an acoustical pattern of sound. The creator of this work has objectified it by putting it down in symbols. The aesthetic creation, i.e., a poem, a sculpture, a composition, appears before the receiving spirit as soon as that spirit sees or hears it. The receiver can avoid the effect only by avoiding its reception, by not paying attention, e.g., if his mind is elsewhere during a concert, so that the sounds reach his ears but not his mind. The aesthetic creation needs no reflection, nor does it require the participation of the understanding. This is its power, through which it has its magical effect. The concept of "magic" shows that the effect lies beyond the realm which the understanding is able to explain. We can only affirm this particular existence of the aesthetic creation, but we do not know how it originates. Nevertheless, we can understand further traits of the aesthetic creation as a phenomenon of the spirit through an examination of its exterior.

STRATA OF THE AESTHETIC CREATION

The visual or acoustical phenomenon as such is the foreground of the work and is real matter (words, tones, lines, colors, etc.) shaped by the author. This shaped matter effects the appearance of the spiritual creation. But this is not merely a foreground, a superficial appearance. Strata lying beyond the foreground appear at the same time as a visual or acoustical occurrence. Rembrandt's self-portrait shows not only the well-painted portrait of an old man; its spiritual content is also directly apparent: the perception of this is the result of seeing, not of reflection. Therefore, something *purely spiritual*, *psychic*, and consequently something nonphysical, appears as a consequence of sensory perception in the aesthetic creation. The more of such background strata a work of literature or art contains, the richer it becomes. Depending on the type of work, these background strata appear either in certain mental images (for example, the visually perceivable statements in Plato's cave-parable), or they produce a feeling in us which is determined solely in its

direction (abstract paintings and sculpture, poems without concrete content, and, above all, works of music).

The author of a work is affected by the deepest layer and advances from it to the foreground, which he shapes to make his most profound emotion felt, thereby making perceptible the statement relating to this sensation. Again we must explain that the receiving mind reaches the deepest layer via the surface and thus has to travel the path in the opposite direction.

The author himself is often not aware of this process. He may think that he is led by his craft and technique, and that he has nothing deeper to communicate (for instance, the statements of Hindemith). But every important work has these inner strata which transmit meaning to the receiving spirit. The perceptible surface is only the means of a far-reaching spiritual and intellectual message.

INDIVIDUAL, OBJECTIVE, AND OBJECTIFIED SPIRIT

We have recognized the work of literature, music, or art as the creation of the spirit. Furthermore, we have seen that it is independent of the spirit of the author who created it, and we designated this autonomy as the objectified spirit. Moreover, we followed the path of this creation in the mind of the author, through the physically perceptible medium of communication, to its appearance in the receiving spirit of the reader or listener.

Throughout we have talked about the spirit of the author, about the objectified spirit of the work itself, and of the accepting spirit of the recipient. This tripartite division is not sufficient to fathom the phenomenon of the spirit to the extent which the subject I am discussing demands; I could just as well say as far as my perceptive faculty and its suitable theme extend. No one, myself included, can fathom the mystery of the spirit. That is also why I mentioned not the problem but only the phenomenon of the spirit, that spirit which appears in our consciousness. If we investigate further, we must be content with two more categories. The problem of the person as the center of the spiritual act, on which Max Scheler elaborates, will remain unexamined.

Let us turn, then, to the individual, objective, and objectified spirit as a category of the spiritual being. We have already spoken of the creation as objectified spirit, but not about its relationship to the individual and objective spirit. Both appear in the objectified spirit of the work. *The objectified spirit is individual and objective spirit* which succeeds in asserting itself in the work. This statement, arid though it may seem, is, in fact, the gate through which we can reach the core of our subject.

The individual spirit rests in the objective spirit; it detaches itself with effort and struggles with the spirit which has been objectified by other people. It becomes objectified itself in this process and is in turn seized upon by the individual spirit of younger men.

It may sound more familiar if we speak of the creative individual, the

Zeitgeist, and the succession of generations. But this type of formulation does not indicate the phenomenon clearly enough. We must therefore impose effort and restraint upon ourselves and extract from man and society only that mysterious, driving, conserving, revolutionary force which we recognize merely as a result of its activity and which we call spirit.

THE INDIVIDUAL SPIRIT

The individual spirit is the autonomous *spiritual entity of the individual*, that is, one which belongs to only a single person. As each human being appears physically distinct (fingerprints, for example) and is an emotionally individual, unique, and irreplaceable entity, so does his mind differ—as far as possible—from those of all other spiritual beings. The reader will have noticed the distinction in the above statement: namely, the compelling physical and emotional individuality on the one hand and the merely possible spiritual individuality on the other. Man is physically individual as a phenomenon, and as such he must have his own emotional sensations, which he alone can experience, because certain experiences are inevitably his own (e.g., love, fear of death). It is certain, furthermore, that each human being can be mentally individual. On the other hand, few make use of this potential. They allow themselves to be led by the undetermined “spirit of person” (*Geist des Man*), which Heidegger so impressively revealed in *Sein und Zeit*. They think but do not make decisions according to their experience; they let others decide for them and express what others do and think.

The first step of the individual mind is independent resolution adjusted to personal experience. This stage need not be discussed here. A higher level is the *individual statement* concerning the existence of the communicator as a person, concerning the existence and being of other people, groups of people, and other beings (nonhuman animate and inanimate world).

Here, according to their content, we have to distinguish *two categories* of personal communication—of the type, that is, which arises solely from the person making a statement:

(a) Belonging to one category are communications about being and existence hitherto unknown, thus newly discovered. The analytical, scientific mind differs thereby from one which compiles only that which puts previous statements into a systematic order; but even that is already a personal stirring of the individual spirit.

(b) The other category contains information about existing things which were brought into existence for the first time by the communicator, those things which were created by his mind: new applications of the forces of nature (inventions) or new, sensually perceptible phenomena (visual or acoustic), that is, aesthetic creations (works of literature, music, and art).

In this instance we must make a further *distinction* which is important to our subject. The scientific achievements of each step and the inventions stem from the individual spirit. The mind of the researcher or inventor has

enriched the knowledge of mankind (discovery) or even the existence of natural forces (inventions) through its personal action. This act, however important it may be, is not individual to the extent that only one scientist or inventor could accomplish it. If the general state of science or technology has created the basis for them, then discoveries and inventions are made inevitable; however, gifted minds might be far ahead of their time and accelerate evolution by hundreds of years. Numerous examples of parallel discoveries and inventions might be quoted. *Aesthetic works are truly individual, i.e., necessarily and forever associated with one person.*

The history of literature, music, and art cannot demonstrate a single instance of a parallel literary, musical, or artistic creation. In these aesthetic works the individual spirit can be perceived by the senses and is therefore a phenomenon whose reality cannot be doubted. Works of literature, music, and art are therefore the most infallible witnesses for the existence of the individual spirit in a particular epoch.

THE OBJECTIVE SPIRIT

I said earlier that the individual and objective spirit may appear in the work as objectified spirit, that is, as a spirit which has become detached from its creator and been given an independent existence. We must now talk about the objective spirit.

All the knowledge which several or many persons, or even nations, possess in common is objective spirit. But this embraces not only knowledge as recognized or supposedly recognized being and existence: All common ideas of any kind belong to the objective spirit as long as they have not been objectified as individual, distinct spiritual entities (e.g., the *Odyssey*, *Iliad*, texts of the Bible). The borders between such works of literature and art, which appear as common property, on the one hand, and as objective spirit on the other, are almost impossible to define, but this is hardly necessary for our argument. It is sufficient to know that the same ideas exist in the consciousness of the same generation in a particular sphere. They are often the result of the same spiritual impulses. This objective spirit is responsible, among other things, for the conflict between generations. It gives rise to contradicting ideologies. It appears as a group spirit. It is the spirit of tradition and the spirit of progress. The notions and ideas of each human being stem, for the greater part, from the objective spirit. The individual spirit of the average person contributes but little toward the ideas of *even* great thinkers and brilliant artists. This holds true not only for their discoveries, inventions, and aesthetic creations, but especially for their day-to-day thinking. The objective spirit is the ocean of human imagination and thought. The momentary existence of each generation either ripples the surface or creates big waves. We shall not explore this infinity of the objective spirit any further.

The reader may think that we have rather daringly separated the spirit from the soul. But we can comprehend the soul only as far as its motions

appear in consciousness and, herewith, in the cognizant spirit. In this way they are, however, absorbed into the spiritual sphere. The soulful stirrings of a generation become evident in its objective spirit. Of the immeasurable realm of human unconsciousness, in which the soul, above all, is active, we comprehend only that which becomes spiritually visible and audible in the consciousness, that is, only that which takes shape in the objective, in the individual, in the objectified spirit. We can gain knowledge about the unconscious only indirectly by way of the spirit. There is but *one* exception: physical touch. But we shall say no more about this now and will especially not linger in that realm in which the direct union of the soul and conscious communication can hardly be separated. What we must emphasize once more is that the communications of thought and feeling, communications, therefore, of the deepest, most tender, and passionate emotions and sensations, must appear as a spiritual message as soon as they reach an indefinite number of persons. This is valid for both science and art. This mode of being in man also imposes rules on works of music. The soul of the composer can communicate what it feels to the creation as objectified spirit only via the individual and objective spirit. And exclusively from the objectified spirit can the receptive mind learn what the composer wanted to say about his knowledge of the world, his joy, and his suffering.

THE CHARACTER OF THE MUSICAL WORK

The work of music emerges from the spirit of the composer and detaches itself from him. It achieves an existence independent of the spirit of its creator. As we established earlier, it receives its spiritual content from the individual mind of the author and from the objective spirit which he has absorbed and by which, primarily, he has been spiritually molded. The work of music has these elements in common with all other creations of the spirit. Like all works of literature and art, indeed, like all other aesthetic works, it is perceived without rational reflection. But while these things, whether they be stories, poems, paintings, sculptures, pantomimes, films, etc., generally appear to the outside world as phenomena which build a bridge to the experience of the reader or viewer, the work of music stands alone. With the exception of music set to texts and program music, in which the accompanying text elicits pictures, it provides no information concerning specific experiences and situations in the lives of people; nor does it depict things of the external world which are curtailed or limited to their main elements. In the work of music the soul of the artist speaks about itself exclusively and directly via the spirit. The artist expresses what people have given him, taken from him, and done to him, without reference to the succession of events. Whatever the eyes of the composer have seen, whatever his hands have held, is changed into sounds, sounds which he heard in his mind and which he communicated through notes and other symbols. *Music is therefore the most human and most soulful of all the arts.*

Nevertheless, the listener encounters more than statements about mankind in the work of music. Creation places in the hands of the composer the sounds, successions of sounds, rhythm, expectant silence, resonance, and fading away of sound within a limited span of time, as necessary and essential modes of being of the musical work. The same law governs the song of birds. Thus the work of music arises from man's understanding of being and from his statements about his existence. But it takes root in being and leads the listener to the deepest secrets of creation; it brings him to a place where knowledge is foolish, where only the intuitive spirit trembles happily in its origins.

Can one still speak so solemnly nowadays? Are these not the remnants of the objective spirit of the last 3000 years? He who has experienced the collective, almost breathless silence and entrancement of hundreds, even thousands, of listeners not just once, but at every consummate performance of a great work of music, will agree with me that neither scientifically analytical nor ironic language, which fearfully rejects feelings, can be adapted to this noble and deeply mysterious event. Even when the music of our time, like the literature and the pictorial arts, avoids merely pretty appearances and tells of the real and therefore often miserable existence of man, his confusion and errors, his fall from the possible harmony of creation, it still does not lose its own essence. The work of music is independent of momentary human existence and exists as a successful, heroic deed of creation.

THE WORK OF MUSIC AND THE *ZEITGEIST*

May I remind the reader that the creative work is objectified spirit, that the objectified spirit duly stems from the spirit of its originator, and that this is individual and objective spirit. The objective spirit, i.e., the spirit of the time, or *Zeitgeist*, shapes above all the spirit of the author. The *Zeitgeist* in turn is formed from the spiritual possession which developed over thousands of years and from that which people of each epoch add to it. This last element stands out; inherited possession is rarely regarded as self-evident foundation. Thus one often describes contemporary music only in terms of its being different. Would even *one* composition of our time be thinkable without the music of the past? Timelessness is preserved, i.e., whatever belongs to man independently of momentary existence in a specific era appears in the continuance of the objective spirit, which is passed on from century to century, from millennium to millennium.

As much as the artist may wish to admire and assimilate the objective spirit which came to him from past generations, his spirit cannot become the spirit of that time. The objective spirit of his time is shaped by the experiences and knowledge of his fellow men. As a creative person he is forced to take part in the creation of the *Zeitgeist*. He reports about what he experiences together with his contemporaries. He makes the events of the day appear in the work of art. In the work of music the soul of the author communicates

its very own emotions because, as we saw earlier, the outer world does not appear as such in music but rather can resound only as it is changed into personal experience. The more strongly the artist experiences the events of the day, the more he separates himself from the differently disposed, time-bound emotions of past generations.

The artist of our time can no longer proclaim an order about which man presumes to have knowledge. The objective spirit of the 19th century still saw man as the master of the universe. The Europeans and Americans felt secure in their inherited order. They were affected by personal destiny and did not concern themselves with the future of mankind. They looked for the measure of their actions in traditional value concepts, without giving consideration to their origin. Only the greatest thinkers, such as Kierkegaard, Hegel, and Nietzsche, brought forth new ideas. The objective spirit was satisfied with appearances, with the picture of a fully accountable order, with the hierarchy of inherited values. Differences of opinion were, so to say, family quarrels that remained on the surface of man's individual or mass destiny.

In the objective spirit of the 20th century, creation appears in its immeasurable greatness; man appears as a being without a secure home. The spirit of the West is being questioned by people of different cultures. It cannot provide answers, since it alludes to values inherited from the past. As a believing Catholic or Protestant, as a philosopher, lawyer, and citizen, the artist must independently explain and justify his convictions, his knowledge, and his picture of the world. Human existence and all creation are, for him, direct sources of information. He knows, however, that he experiences only their outward appearance and not their entire essence. The spiritual and political storms of the 20th century have swept away the apparently secure world of the 19th century. Only that part of the objective spirit which knows the eternal and unchangeable truths about man has survived. Musicians of our time therefore give as accompaniments to their compositions texts from the Bible, liturgy, or from thinkers and poets of antiquity.

This fragmentary statement concerning the relationship of the objective spirit of our times to the objective spirit of the last century is sufficient to show that we cannot expect composers to dwell in the external tranquility of the 19th century.

In contemporary works of music we encounter either spiritual restlessness, in that it is only a mode or expression of an existence ruled by the body, or a striving for new spiritual laws; that is, these new rules derive directly from man's being, from his questionable and insecure existence. What the soul of the composer grasps intuitively, his spirit wishes to express in sounds and rhythms.

The 19th-century picture of the world was seemingly shaped from an objectively scientific view; the scientific discoveries in the Renaissance, such as those of Galileo and Newton, laid the foundation for this vast thought structure, to which music was a parallel development. When the structure

collapsed, music, too, could no longer endure in the same manner. Now that philosophy has thrust aside the *mathesis generalis* of Leibniz as a human fantasy (as in the lifelong work of Edmund Husserl), now that politics have been eviscerated because of radical new considerations, art cannot remain unaffected. This change is the work of the objective spirit and not the eccentric struggle of a composer with a mania for innovation. The one slowly and carefully untangles itself from the spirit of earlier generations, while the other pushes ahead stormily.

All this in no way means that works of former times, including musical works, particularly those of the 19th century, are insignificant or totally wrong for us. Those that arose from the depths of human emotion bear witness to the unchangeable being of man, which is affected only in its superficial existence by the changes of time. The great artists always created their works with a direct regard for man and creation. They did not let themselves be held back by the objective spirit. Therefore, their messages are important and precious to us, even if their dress is unfashionable. We do not want to lose them. *We must not, however, turn a deaf ear to those who speak of today*, who speak of man as they perceive his existence, because we may maintain a partiality and loyalty for past speakers. As in every era, most people, including composers, allow themselves to be led by the objective spirit, without feeling anything deeper themselves. Even what is said by these superficial people warrants our attention today. The coming generation will no longer be bound by it. Were it not for these would-be-artists, however, the few great ones would have no opportunity to perfect and detach themselves from the stream of contemporary, sectarian music. Thousands of composers are necessary to teach those few to tell future generations how the being of man was experienced by great musicians and held in the objective spirit of their works.

The music of our times is a part of the spiritual stream in which the history of man flows by. Yet, at the same time the masterpieces are islands which stand out from the waves as objectified spirit and are not carried away by the flow.

What would the objectified spirit be without the receptive spirit, however? If the works of our contemporary composers were to find no willing ears, they would then exist only in the spirit of their creators; but these composers would despair in their task and be crushed by the weight of their emotions, a burden which no one could relieve. There is still much to say about the wanton and self-satisfied dissemination which can be intended only for a small circle of chosen persons, but we shall not discuss these details. We are concerned only with the character of contemporary music as an expression of the objective spirit of our era.

THE INTERPRETER AND THE *ZEITGEIST*

The work of music is spiritual, but it appears in a shape that can be perceived by the senses. Notes and other related symbols, as means of com-

munication, describe the work visually but do not carry it to its ultimate form. Notes lead only to a mental hearing. The work of music should, however, emerge from the notes as a sounding work and, in fact, as a *physically perceptible phenomenon of sound*. To that effect one needs sources which create sounds (human voices, instruments) and those persons who know how to understand and master them. It is the singers and musicians, conductors, soloists, orchestral players, and chorus members who bring the work of music to that sound structure which the composer shaped and heard in his mind.

The performing artists or interpreters present the work; that is, they recognize the spiritual message in the whirl of notes and other symbols and make it sound, suspended in space and the succession of time. Before considering this phenomenon in more detail and experiencing the effect of the interpreter's spirit, we shall in passing look at the experiencing of other creative categories in order to reaffirm the individuality of the work of music.

With paintings, sculpture, and literary works, everyone to whom the author's message is presented observes it directly. Dramatic works can appear as easily in the mind of the reader as on stage, and sometimes in a more joyful and fascinating reproduction. Nevertheless, in these works the director and actor intercede as mediators between the poet and the receiving spirit of the onlooker and listener. But as soon as a drama is coupled with a work of music, not even the professional musician, let alone the layman, can extract a valid experiencing of it from the score. Only the change of this spiritual work into a pattern of sound can do that.

Thus the work of music, by its very nature, is the only one of the aesthetic creations which cannot communicate with the receiving spirit without an intermediary. This knowledge says something important about the spiritual essence of a work of music. The work of music first appears in the receiving spirit of the performing musician and enters his mind as a spiritual creation. As he understands it in his own mind and feels it stir in his soul, he embodies it in sound and thereby imparts it to the ears and receiving spirit of the listeners.

The performing artist, however, is not only a spiritual and physical intermediary. The composer does not command the means to communicate the work as he hears it in his mind. The performing artist must add from his own spirit what is essential for a live performance and what is suited, of course, to the spirit of the composition. The conductor and the soloists or small ensembles (e.g., from duet through octet) must at each performance spiritually complete in sound the work given to them. They finish the almost but not quite communicated work when they pass it on to the listener. I will let the matter drop with this statement and not present the differing tasks of individual interpreters (conductors and soloists) on the one hand and groups (orchestras and choruses) on the other. What I am saying at this point about interpreters and the *Zeitgeist* concerns mainly conductors and soloists. I regard the orchestra as the instrument of the conductor.

The spirit of the *interpreter* is formed by the objective spirit of his era and by his individual spirit. No performing artist can be the spirit of Bach's or Beethoven's time or even of Wagner's or Mahler's. As a spirit of his own time the interpreter encounters the objectified spirit of the composer, consequently the spirit of that particular time, the spirit of the 16th, 17th, 18th, 19th, and beginning of the 20th century. He encounters it in notes and other symbols. This does not portray the work in all its details, as I have demonstrated. From his own spirit the interpreter adds just the thing that gives the work life. Yet in today's world he encounters more than the score alone; he knows the work through numerous performances by other interpreters; through records he can encounter these sound examples as often as he wishes. The interpreter is in danger and may fall into the trap of not performing the work individually from the score; such interpreters silence their individual spirit, if it makes itself felt at all. They take the work of others as a ready-made product. Thus, their spirit does not encounter the objectified spirit of the composer directly but rather the finished, performed work in which the spirit of another interpreter has participated.

Can, indeed should, the spirit of the interpreter confront the spirit of the composer directly? I can answer only the first part of this question: I can speak about ability. This lies in the sphere of the phenomenologically objective statement. Remarks about the second part of the question, on the other hand, fall within the sphere of competence of musicians and musicologists.

The answer to the first question emerges from the encounter of the objectified spirit of the composer with the spirit of the interpreter. The latter is also objective and individual spirit. The objective spirit is not only that which holds sway in all people of an era, or of just a certain locality or cultural class. People of a certain sphere of activity and emotion have their own objective spirit in this regard. The objective spirit is not built anew in each era; the contents of former times are passed on, and we therefore speak of *tradition*. That which convinces people remains; the purely fashionable things which grow out of a need for change fade away and then sometimes reemerge in the changing of taste.

The spirit of the interpreter takes over ideas about the state of the soul and mind of the composer with whose work he concerns himself, from the objective spirit of musicians. He receives corresponding ideas about timbres and sonority from his teachers and other models. Even if his individual spirit moves independently, he cannot detach himself from the objective spirit in which it was formed. Should the interpreter have something personal to communicate and, at the same time, perceive and wish to preserve the awe of the cultivation of music in former generations, that is, of their musical culture, he carefully introduces the spirit of his own time in his interpretation. He cannot avoid this change in interpretation; otherwise, he would split his being into living existence on the one hand and anachronistic, sedimentary experience and notion on the other. If he does this, he lives and perceives in the daily

experiences of his time as a contemporary; but as an artist he withdraws into the past.

The interpreter, on the other hand, who looks at his time as a contrast to the immediate past seeks innovation everywhere. He pays no heed to traditional ideas and wishes to encounter the objectified spirit of the works of former times directly; as a spirit of his own time he wishes to merge with the spirit of another age and be free of the spiritual layers which lie in-between. It is not only the revolutionary zeal of the missionary that drives interpreters to these undogmatic performances. On occasion antecedents from other cultural fields also steer the interpreter past ideas about works, especially those formed in the western European sphere, and to a direct meeting with the score. Perhaps he is also unconcerned with the subjective existence of the composer who created it.

In the concert halls of today we meet interpreters of works who enrapture uncritical listeners but evoke anger in connoisseurs. The latter are those who welcomed and cherished with faith and love their ideas about works as children of our time. They were, most of all, filled with the inherited objective spirit of the European music culture.

At this point the decision on what should be done falls due. What freedom is suited to the individual spirit as an expression of his time as opposed to the objective spirit of tradition or even the image of the subjective existence of the composer? Let whoever is familiar with music, irrespective of era, decide this. I see only the question and do not know the answer. This much I do know: the interpreter has to render the work as it is written down; the latitude of interpretation lies only in the area in which one cannot find the objectified spirit of the composer and in which the work therefore has to be completed in performance. The case is entirely different when it involves the use of one work for the creation of another, a second-hand work. This is not performance but rather arrangement.

The musical work of the spirit exists in sound through interpretation. The sensuous attractiveness of sound exists, of necessity, in unison with the spiritual communication. The more beautiful the sound of the work, the more easily it is accepted by the receiving spirit. Sonorous attractiveness is the work of the composer and the interpreter. The latter plays a decisive part. The mantle of sound can be woven well only if the interpreter has acquired the necessary ability. Now and then the interpreter is open to the temptation to demonstrate his technical skill and catch the listener in the net of euphony, that is, to infatuate him with that part of the performance which should serve only to transmit a message that is as complete as possible to the receiving spirit. The work for such an interpreter is merely a means and pretext for focusing attention on himself.

We must now differentiate between the direct encounter of the interpreter with the objectified spirit which appears in the work and those actions which remain in the physical, tonal, and technical-virtuoso foreground. The borders are almost impossible to find. The centers of gravity are,

in fact, often shifted during a performance. The connoisseurs, e.g., the music critics, can say whether the interpreter on the podium is possessed by the *Zeitgeist*, or whether he is a virtuoso playing tricks with his abilities, purely providing a treat for the eyes and ears.

THE LISTENER AND THE *ZEITGEIST*

Somewhere at the beginning of this paper I reached the conclusion that the single human being is individual in body and soul, that he can attain spiritual autonomy, but that he very often fails to do so. I spoke of human lassitude, of splashing around in the shallow waters of words and actions. This may be good in many respects. We are not passing judgment here but merely establishing this fact. A person would like above all to have his peace and not see tradition shaken or even overturned. But the *Zeitgeist* acts constantly as a perpetrator of disorder. In his labors man cannot avoid all that concerns his physical being. Technology and politics rule human existence. Art, however, is the realm which is detached from that compulsion, as Schiller explained in his 26th and 27th letters, "On the Aesthetic Training of Man." In them the power of the spirit is completely free and rules according to its own desires.

The same freedom that belongs to the creative spirit is also part of the receiving spirit, e.g., the concert-goer. He too can sojourn wherever he desires in the realm of art, but he cannot find access so easily. As a rule, in matters of art, there is a delay of one or two generations between supply and demand, while all other wares on the market are either immediately accepted or forever rejected (with the exception of great inventions).

In music the receiving spirit must make the greatest effort to reach the objectified spirit of contemporary works. We learned earlier that the soul of the artist speaks most directly in music. What the *Zeitgeist* knows and surmises appears without digression in the objectified spirit of the work. The listener, who consciously or unconsciously detaches himself only reluctantly from the inheritance which is familiar to him, rejects the statements of contemporary music about existence in his time, statements which express the fears and pains with raw and often brutal harshness. He prefers to hear those messages about human fate which are already familiar to him and whose euphony mitigates the shock of the message itself (e.g., Schubert's *Winterreise*). Added to this is the fact that the work of music can hardly be grasped at first hearing because of its detachment from any apparent connection with our experiences. The receiving spirit cannot stand before it as before a picture or sculpture and cannot go back, as in a book. The work flows past his ears; each single part is physically present for only a moment. The listener must shape the work into a unity in his mind.

Is it then surprising that even the willing concert-goer finds it difficult to approach the spirit of contemporary composition and to open his ears, his spirit, and his soul to it? How shall he separate the serious message from the superficial one?

Nonetheless, he cannot refuse entry into his being to the spirit of today's composers. I could continue these thoughts at great length; you, the reader, may continue the subject in your own mind.

CONCLUSION

In concert programs the spirit of former centuries, as it was objectified by previous composers, and the spirit of today, which has been stressed by living composers, meet the spirit of the interpreters of various cultural origins, even if traditional occidental training is predominant. The listeners, who come from all ends of the earth, bear witness to this encounter.

Detached from the stresses of everyday life and free from every constraint, spirit meets spirit. The eternal in man and the merely momentary appear in the works, in the interpretations, and in the audience. The fearful and joyful excitement of the soul and spirit, the upheaval, and the trusting peace in the harmony of creation appear in the sounds.

Music festivals are a festival of the human spirit communing with itself. There it has the opportunity to hear itself, to understand itself in relation to the present time, and to trace its path back through the centuries.

NOTES

¹ From 1966 until his retirement in 1970, Professor Troller was President of the Lucerne Music Festival, for which he prepared this paper.

* This article is the first in what *Current Musicology* hopes will be a continuing series of English translations of publications that might otherwise remain unavailable to most of our readers.