
A Theory of Musical Narrative

This study uses semiotic theory in order to investigate different kinds of musical communication.

Computational Music Analysis

The international research project on Musical Signification, since its founding over ten years ago, has sought to win new scholars to musical semiotics. To that end, the Department of Musicology at Helsinki University has already organized five international doctoral and postdoctoral seminars. They have become something of a tradition. The anthology consists of papers presented in the three first seminars covering areas from music philosophy and aesthetics to the analysis of vocal and instrumental as well as electro-acoustic music, interrelationships of arts, music history, post-modernism, etc.

Musical Semantics

The Musical Topic discusses three tropes prominently featured in Western European music: the hunt, the military, and the pastoral. Raymond Monelle provides an in-depth cultural and historical study of musical topics -- short melodic figures, harmonic or rhythmic formulae carrying literal or lexical meaning -- through consideration of their origin, thematization, manifestation, and meaning. The Musical Topic shows the connections of musical meaning to literature, social history, and the fine arts.

All About Music

For thousands of years music in India has been considered a signifying art. Indian music creates and represents meanings of all kinds, some of which extend outwardly to the cosmos, while others arise inwardly, in the refined feelings which a musical connoisseur experiences when listening to it. In this book the author explores signification in Hindustani classical music along a two-fold path. Martinez first constructs a theory of musical semiotics based on the sign-theories of Charles Sanders Peirce. He then applies his theory to the analysis of various types of Hindustani music and how they generate significations. The author engages such fundamental issues as sound quality, raga, tala and form, while advancing his unique interpretations of well-known semiotic phenomena like iconicity, metalanguage, indexicality, symbolism, Martinez’s study also provides deep insight into semiotic issues of musical perception, performance, scholarship, and composition. An specially innovative and extensive section of the book analyzes representations in Hindustani music in terms of the Indian aesthetic theory of rasa. The evolution of the rasa system as applied to musical structures is traced historically and analyzed semiotically. In the light of Martinez’s theories, Hindustani music reveals itself to be both a delightfully sensuous and highly sophisticated system of acoustic representations.

Existential Semiotics

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Signs of Imagination, Identity, and Experience

Using Classical violin music as her principal laboratory, the author examines how a performance incorporates distinctive features not only of the work but of the performer as well—and how the listener goes about interpreting not only the composer's work and the performer's rendering of the work, but the performer's and listener's identities as well. A richly interdisciplinary approach to a very common, yet persistently mysterious, part of our lives.

Semiotics of Classical Music

The music of Shostakovich has been at the centre of interest of both the general public and dedicated scholars throughout the last twenty years. Most of the relevant literature, however, is of a biographical nature. The focus of this book is musical irony. It offers new methodologies for the semiotic analysis of music, and inspects the ironical messages in Shostakovich's music independently of political and biographical bias. Its approach to music is
interdisciplinary, comparing musical devices with the artistic principles and literary analyses of satire, irony, parody and the grotesque. Each one of these is firstly inspected and defined as a separate subject, independent of music. The results of these inspections are subsequently applied to music, firstly music in general and then more specifically to the music of Shostakovich. The composer's cultural and historical milieux are taken into account and, where relevant, inspected and analysed separately before their application to the music.

Semiotics of Music, Semiotics of Sound, and Film Existential semiotics involves an a priori state of signs and their fixation into objective entities. These essays define this new philosophical field.

The Sonic Self This book shows how music is central to the construction and regulation of everyday life.

An Examination of Semiotics in Musical Analysis Theory of Film Music strives to explain how music functions in film, how it is perceived by viewers, and which meanings and values it represents in the dramaturgy of a film work. The book points out the scope of expressive potentials of music in film and arranges them in systems. It draws upon the knowledge of psychology of perception, aesthetics, and semiotics, and it explains film music through concepts, and terms of semiotics. It is concerned with music in relation to film space and time, music's incorporation in film montage, and music's impressiveness in relation to the graphic nature of film pictures. It points out the expression and symbolism of individual historical and genre types of music. Trying to provide a more vivid account of the extent of theoretically outlined propositions, the book offers more than 200 examples of verbal description of certain moments in films ranging from the beginnings of the sound film up to the present. They also manifest typical creative tendencies in the history of film music. The book is supplemented with score excerpts, analyses, photographs, and registers.

Playing with Signs This book explains music's comprehensive ontology, its way of existence and processing, as specified in its compact characterization: music embodies meaningful communication and mediates physically between its emotional and mental layers. The book unfolds in a basic discourse in everyday language that is accessible to everybody who wants to understand what this topic is about. Musical ontology is delayed in its fundamental dimensions: its realities, its meaningful communication, and its embodied utterance from musical creators to an interested audience. The authors' approach is applicable to every musical genre and is scientific, the book is suitable for non-musicians and non-scientists alike.

Musical Semiotics in Growth

The Sense of Music "An Ahmanson Foundation book in the humanities"--Dust jacket.

Music Semiotics: A Network of Significations This book presents sixteen chapters in Volume 1. This Volume I of the Proceedings of the Worldwide Music Conference 2021 offers a smorgasbord of scientific approaches to music. The congress is one of a kind; it is dedicated not to a specific field but to the interdisciplinary developments and the interaction with the representatives from actual scientific disciplines. The languages of mathematics, computer science, semiotics, palaeography, and medicine are in the mix; geography of the studies is also impressive—Greece, Mexico, China, Russia, India, Poland, and USA, to name just a few. The purpose of such juxtaposition is to see how the terminology, categorical apparatus, and interpretations of music vary from science to science and how this can enrich the terminology of music theory. They cover a wide range of topics that the editors divided into four subfields: music in interdisciplinary contexts, music and current technology, musical instruments and voice, and music pedagogy and medicine. The opening section of the Proceedings is thus dedicated to the idea of interdisciplinarity, relationship of creator of theory of harmony Rameau to sciences of his time, the idea of number in music, co-creation, and the category of musical network. Three more chapters here deal with Russian palaeography, Indian musical genre, and the idea of musical semiotics. It is a kind of opening statement from music theorists. Part two, music and current technology, united three chapters, on "zero gravity" concept in modern music, discussion of scales as mathematical networks, and the innovation in digital music making, transforming it from stationary to mobile applications. The third part, musical instruments and voice, is of special interest because it is in the study of the instruments, the design, acoustic characteristics, and tuning, and sciences have cooperated with music theory for centuries. In addition to instruments, one chapter here is dedicated to voice. The last part, musical pedagogy and medicine, takes the reader even further into the interdisciplinary domain. The Proceedings is written in standard English language, prepared for the pleasure of reading of wide circles of professionals in different fields. The purpose of the editors is to bring this rather diverse set of texts into the context of a fruitful dialogue.

Singing in Signs Music is found in every identified culture that man has ever known, in past and in present. Every ancient tribe even the isolated ones have known to have music especially in their rituals and prayers. Music has always been a part of us since the ancient times. According to historians it has existence among us for the past 55,000 years. Initially music may have been invented in Africa which later developed to become an imperative part in human life. A culture's music is affected by all various facets of that culture, including economic and social group and skill, environment and access to equipment. The feelings and thoughts that music articulates, the circumstances in which music is played and heard, and the approach towards the music players and composers all differ between areas and ages. This eBook is all about concepts, conjectures and theories formed about the many characteristics of music. Music theory is a part of Musicology which is an intellectual analysis and study of music and musicology that comes under the vast field of studies on humanities. Music is normally concerned with intellectual characteristics of music like scales, tuning, consonance or rhythm but besides this there is another theory of the concrete aspects like creating music, orchestration, electronic
sound and protection etc. Any person who learns, imparts and pens about music theory is a music theorist.

A Semiotic Approach to Musical Metaphor

Music offers a new insight into human cognition. The musical play with sounds in time, in which we share feelings, gestures and narratives, has fascinated people from all times and cultures. The author studies this semiotic behavior in the light of research from a number of sources. Being an analytical study, the volume combines evidence from neurobiology, developmental psychology and cognitive science. It aims to bridge the gap between music as an empirical object in the world and music as lived experience. This is the semantic aspect of music: how can something like an auditory stream of structured sound evoke such a strong reaction in the listener? The book is in two parts. In the first part, the biological foundations of music and their cognitive manifestations are considered in order to establish a groundwork for speaking of music in generic, cross-cultural terms. The second part develops the semantic aspect of music as an embodied, emotively grounded and cognitively structured expression of human experience.

The Semiotics of Perception

Semiosis in Hindustani Music

Byron Almén proposes an original synthesis of approaches to musical narrative from literary criticism, semiotics, historiography, musicology, and music theory, resulting in a significant critical reorientation of the field. This volume includes an extensive survey of traditional approaches to musical narrative illustrated by a wide variety of musical examples that highlight the range and applicability of the theoretical apparatus. Almén provides a careful delineation of the essential elements and preconditions of musical narrative organization, an eclectic analytical model applicable to a wide range of musical styles and repertoires, a classification scheme of narrative types and subtypes reflecting conceptually distinct narrative strategies, a wide array of interpretive categories, and a sensitivity to the dependence of narrative interpretation on the cultural milieu of the work, its various audiences, and the analyst. A Theory of Musical Narrative provides both an excellent introduction to an increasingly important conceptual domain and a complex reassessment of its possibilities and characteristics.

Signs of Music

Music and Discourse

Music is said to be the most autonomous and least representative of all the arts. However, it reflects in many ways the realities around it and influences its social and cultural environments. Music is as much biology, gender, gesture - something intertextual, even transcendental. Musical signs can be studied throughout their history as well as musical semiotics with its own background. Composers from Chopin to Sibelius and authors from Nietzsche to Greimas and Barthes illustrate the avenues of this new discipline within semiotics and musicology.

Music as Discourse

A Theory of Musical Semiotics

Transdisciplinary and intermedial analysis of the experience of music Nowadays musical semiotics no longer ignores the fundamental challenges raised by cognitive sciences, ethology, or linguistics. Creation, action and experience play an increasing role in how we understand music, a sounding structure impinging upon our body, our mind, and the world we live in. Not discarding music as a closed system, an integral experience of music demands a transdisciplinary dialogue with other domains as well. Music, Analysis, Experience brings together contributions by semioticians, performers, and scholars from cognitive sciences, philosophy, and cultural studies, and deals with these fundamental questionings. Transdisciplinary and intermedial approaches to music meet musically oriented contributions to classical music, pop music, South American song, opera, narratology, and philosophy.

Contributors

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Musical Semiotics Revisited

Musical semiotics is a new discipline and paradigm of both semiotics and musicology. In its tradition, the current volume constitutes a radically new solution to the theoretical problem of how musical meanings emerge and how they are transmitted by musical signs even in most "absolute" and abstract musical works of Western classical heritage. Works from syntheses, lived, chamber music to opera are approached and studied here with methods of semiotic inspiration. Its analyses stem from systematic methods in the author's previous work, yet totally new analytic concepts are also launched in order to elucidate profound musical significations verbally. The book reflects the new phase in the author's semiotic approach, the one characterized by the so-called "existential semiotics" elaborated on the basis of philosophers from Kant, Hegel and Kierkegaard to Jaspers, Heidegger, Sartre and Marcel. The key notions like musical subject, Schein, becoming, temporality, modalities, Dasein, transcendence put musical facts in a completely new light and perspectives of interpretation. The volume attempts to make explicit what is implicit in every musical interpretation, intuition and understanding: to explain how compositions and composers "talk" to us. Its analyses are accessible due to the book's universal approach. Music is experienced as a language, communicating from one subject to another.
Musical Semiotics and Music Theory The idea that music acts in part as a vehicle for meaning is a truism in both popular reception and music scholarship. The language used to speak and to write about music is replete with words that describe it metaphorically. Melodies descend; rhythms speed up; timbre is smooth. Certainly, we use these terms for communicative facility, yet by applying this language to music, we create metaphors that, according to Ludwig Wittgenstein, act as frames that direct interpretation. In the paper, I put forth a theory that views metaphor as the process of semantic transfer or substitution in which a non-musical concept stands in for a musical feature, effectively enabling us to hear music as more than simply sound. The use of certain metaphors receives inspiration from previously heard music, programs, a perceived similarity with non-musical phenomena, or a combination of these. The methodology that I propose coordinates these metaphors—places them within a single frame—and enables them to interact with one another and to create a more palpable musical experience for the listener. I use Chopin's E minor and A major preludes from Op. 28 as the primary models for expounding this hermeneutic.

How Musical is a Whale? This book presents a new semiotic theory based upon category/topos theory, and applied to a classification (three types) of creativity in music and mathematics. The purpose is a first functorial approach to a mathematical semiotics that will be applied to AI implementations for creativity. It is the only semiotic approach to creativity in music and mathematics that uses topos theory and its applications to music theory. Of particular interest is the generalized Yoneda embedding in the bidual of the category of categories (Lawvere) parametrizes semiotic units and enables a Čech cohomology of manifolds of semiotic entities. It opens up a conceptual mathematics as initiated by Grothendieck and Galois. It enables a precise description of musical and mathematical creativity, including a classification thereof in three types. This approach is new, as it connects topos theory, semiotics, creativity theory, and AI objectives for a missing link to HI (Human Intelligence). The readers can apply creativity research using our classification, cohomology theory, generalized Yoneda embedding, and Java implementation of the presented functorial display of semiotics, especially generalizing the Hjelmslev architecture. The intended audience are academic, industrial, and artistic researchers in creativity.

Linguistics and Semiotics in Music

Functorial Semiotics for Creativity in Music and Mathematics

Music, Analysis, Experience Of all the repertoires of Western Art music, none is as explicitly listener-oriented as that of the late eighteenth and early nineteenth centuries. Yet few attempts to analyze the so-called Classic Style have embraced the semiotic implications of this condition. Playing with Signs proposes a listener-oriented theory of Classic instrumental music that encompasses its two most fundamental communicative dimensions: expression and structure. Units of expression, defined in reference to topoi, are shown here to interact with, confront, and merge into units of structure, defined in terms of the rhetorical conventions of beginning, continuing, and ending. The book draws on examples from works by Mozart, Haydn, and Beethoven to show that the explicitly referential, even theatrical, surface of Classic music derives from a play with signs. Although addressed primarily to readers interested in musical analysis, the book opens up fruitful avenues for further research into musical semiotics, aesthetics, and Classicism. Originally published in 1991. The Princeton Legacy Library uses the latest print-on-demand technology to again make available previously out-of-print books from the distinguished backlist of Princeton University Press. These editions preserve the original texts of these important books while presenting them in durable paperback and hardcover editions. The goal of the Princeton Legacy Library is to vastly increase access to the rich scholarly heritage found in the thousands of books published by Princeton University Press since its founding in 1905.


Theory of Film Music Topic theory, the study of conventional musical figures, has emerged as a significant method of analysis for music scholars in the last thirty years. Much current research critically interprets and contextualizes topics from a variety of musical eras and styles, including film music. However, studying film presents music scholars with a new set of issues since the filmic medium not only includes visual signs in the form of the image track, but also another category of sonic signs in the form of sound design. In film sound tracks, musical signs and sonic signs frequently butt up against one another and even pass into one another’s domain. My dissertation seeks to bridge the current gap between music figures and sound figures by arguing that musical figures are best considered as a special case of general sound figures that I call acousticons. Acousticons are conventionalized figures of music or sound (e.g. reverb, fidelity) and they exist on a continuum defined by the poles of purely musical codes on the one hand and purely sonic codes on the other. Chapter 1 presents a general model of the acousticon using Peirce’s modes of the sign. It interrogates iconic models presented in media studies and iconography as possible corollaries to the sound track. Chapter 2 and 3 present case studies of acousticons. Chapter 2 gives a case study of acousticons of the subjective interior in the form of the lowered submediant and subjective, point-of-audition sound. Chapter 3 considers how films deploy reverberation and low fidelity recordings acousticonically to bring about different types of nostalgia. Chapter 4 considers the potential for acousticons outside of the sound track medium. It looks at how acousticons might work in audio branding. Specifically, it looks at the construction of sonic logos, product sound, and the use of popular music in advertising and product design.

The Music of Meaning The question of whether music has meaning has been the subject of sustained debate ever since music became a subject of academic inquiry. Is music a language? Does it communicate specific ideas and emotions? What does music mean, and how does this meaning occur? Kofi Agawu’s Music as Discourse has become a standard and
definitive work in musical semiotics. Working at the nexus of musicology, ethnomusicology, and music philosophy and aesthetics, Agawu presents a synthetic and innovative approach to musical meaning which argues deftly for the thinking of music as a discourse in itself—composed not only of sequences of gestures, phrases, or progressions, but rather also of the very philosophical and linguistic props that enable the analytical formulations made about music as an object of study. The book provides extensive demonstration of the pertinence of a semiological approach to understanding the fully-freighted language of romantic music, stresses the importance of a generative approach to tonal understanding, and provides further insight into the analogy between music and language. Music as Discourse is an essential read for all who are interested in the theory, analysis and semiotics of music of the romantic period.

Song and Signification The fictional Dr. Strabismus sets out to write a new comprehensive theory of music. But music’s tendency to deconstruct itself combined with the complexities of postmodernism doom him to failure. This is the parable that frames The Sense of Music, a novel treatment of music theory that reinterprets the modern history of Western music in the terms of semiotics. Based on the assumption that music cannot be described without reference to its meaning, Raymond Monelle proposes that works of the Western classical tradition be analyzed in terms of temporality, subjectivity, and topic theory. Critical of the abstract analysis of musical scores, Monelle argues that the score does not reveal music’s sense. That sense—what a piece of music says and signifies—can be understood only with reference to history, culture, and the other arts. Thus, music is meaningful in that it signifies cultural temporalities and themes, from the traditional manly heroism of the hunt to military power to postmodern “polyvocality.” This theoretical innovation allows Monelle to describe how the Classical style of the eighteenth century—which he reads as a balance of lyric and progressive time—gave way to the Romantic need for emotional realism. He argues that irony and ambiguity subsequently eroded the domination of personal emotion in Western music as well as literature, killing the composer’s subjectivity with that of the author. This leaves Dr. Strabismus suffering from the postmodern condition, and Raymond Monelle with an exciting, controversial new approach to understanding music and its history.

Music in Everyday Life This book is about meaning in music, poetry, and language; it is about signs: symbols, icons, diagrams, and more. It concerns art and how we communicate, how we make sense to each other “including the concept of nonsense. It is about metaphor and irony. It embraces a vast human universe of signification and some of its cognitive machines of meaning-making: a complex and diverse unfolding of the expressive human mind. These 24 essays study different aspects of the way we signify, present recent research and models of such processes, and discuss thé “often intricaté “problems of understanding the relations between expression and thought. In evolution, music may have preceded the language of words, and music remains indirectly present in every temporal unfolding of bodily, affective, playful, meaningful activity. We are immersed in meaning and have to â “listen”TM) to it since it constitutes the semiotic reality structuring the world as we experience it.

The Musical Topic This book provides an in-depth introduction and overview of current research in computational music analysis. Its seventeen chapters, written by leading researchers, collectively represent the diversity as well as the technical and philosophical sophistication of the work being done today in this intensely interdisciplinary field. A broad range of approaches are presented, employing techniques originating in disciplines such as linguistics, information theory, information retrieval, pattern recognition, machine learning, topology, algebra and signal processing. Many of the methods described draw on well-established theories in music theory and analysis, such as Forte’s pitch-class set theory, Schenkerian analysis, the methods of semiotic analysis developed by Ruwet and Nattiez, and Lerdahl and Jackendoff’s Generative Theory of Tonal Music. The book is divided into six parts, covering methodological issues, harmonic and pitch-class set analysis, form and voice-separation, grammars and hierarchical reduction, motivic analysis and pattern discovery and, finally, classification and the discovery of distinctive patterns. As a detailed and up-to-date picture of current research in computational music analysis, the book provides an invaluable resource for researchers, teachers and students in music theory and analysis, computer science, music information retrieval and related disciplines. It also provides a state-of-the-art reference for practitioners in the music technology industry.

Music Theory

Music Semiotics and Literary Theory United in their indebtedness to the scholarship of Raymond Monelle, an international group of contributors, including leading authorities on music and culture, come together in this state of the art volume to investigate different ways in which music signifies. Music semiotics asks what music signifies as well as how the signification process takes place. Looking at the nature of musical texts and music’s narrativity, a number of the essays in this collection delve into the relationship between music and philosophy, literature, poetry, folk traditions and the theatre, with opera a genre that particularly lends itself to this mode of investigation. Other contributions look at theories of musical markedness, metaphor and irony, using examples and specific musical texts to serve as case studies to validate their theoretical approaches. Musical works discussed include those by Haydn, Mozart, Beethoven, Schumann, Wagner, Stravinsky, Bartók/Xenakis, Kutavicius and John Adams, offering stimulating discussions of music that attest to its beauty as much as to its intellectual challenge. Taking Monelle’s writing as a model, the contributions adhere to a method of logical argumentation presented in a civilized and respectful way, even - and particularly - when controversial issues are at stake, keeping in mind that contemplating the significance of music is a way to contemplate life itself.

Mahler’s Sixth Symphony Singing in Signs: New Semiotic Explorations of Opera offers a bold and refreshing assessment of the state of opera study as seen through the lens of semiotics. At its core, the volume responds to Carolyn Abbate and Roger Parker’s Analyzing Opera, utilizing a semiotic framework to embrace opera on its own terms and engage all of its constituent elements in interpretation. Chapters in this collection resurrect the larger sense of serious operatic study as a
multi-faceted, interpretive discipline, no longer in isolation. Contributors pay particular attention to the musical, dramatic, cultural, and performative in opera and how these modes can create an intertext that informs interpretation. Combining traditional and emerging methodologies, Singing in Signs engages composer-constructed and work-specific music-semiotic systems, broader socio-cultural music codes, and narrative strategies, with implications for performance and staging practices today.

Mozart and Enlightenment Semiotics

Musical Signification

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