

Can Music Play a Role in Intercultural Dialogue?

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Introduction

The significance of intercultural dialogue is a recurring theme in the present philosophical debate on multiculturalism. In a time of competing views between cultures its moral necessity seems even more pressing, given that we have effectively become what Seyla Benhabib calls a ‘community of interdependence’ (Benhabib, 2002: 35). In order to validate conflicting narratives and move towards mutual understanding, Benhabib advocates a ‘complex cultural dialogue’, a moral conversation which aims at seeing the Other as ‘concrete other’, and entails norms of interaction that are “norms of friendship, love and care” (ibid.: 1992: 159). Hans-Georg Gadamer proposes a hermeneutical ‘civilizational dialogue’, through which we may experience the ‘otherness as the ‘other’ of ourselves’, hoping to achieve a ‘fusion of horizons’ (Dallmayr, 2002: 65, 40). Hannah Arendt has defended the idea of ‘enlarged mentality’, by which judgement is made from the standpoint of the Other (Moynagh, 1997: 36).

Admittedly, neither implies immediate mutual consensus. In the hope of ultimately achieving understanding and agreement, all three bear the possibility of uncomfortable challenging and questioning, which is not without risks. The issues are often complex, views discordant, and sometimes burdened with immense historic baggage. Jürgen Habermas sustains, that a successful outcome depends on the fulfillment of certain preliminary criteria. The prospect of success may also be further challenged by the limitations of language. Yet, and in view of these limitations and challenges, it seems imperative that any avenue that might allow to build a common ground should be explored. It may be the case to break away from the confinements of pure rationality and to seek an opening between cultures within an enlarged view of the hermeneutical dialogue.

Charles Taylor seems to allude to such an approach by saying, that the dialogue that has to take place must be “an encounter between mutually decentered agents involved in a transformative event [...] more like a game or a dance [...] a view in which humans are [...] on a journey toward broader horizons (possibly toward metanoia or change of heart)” (cited in Dallmayr, 2002: 45, 46). Therefore, the aim of this essay is to investigate the potential of fusing horizons by the shared experience of music.

Experience shows that shared musical experiences can generate strong emotions and an increasing number of cross-cultural musical projects would seem to indicate that people are seeking this shared experience across cultures in order to reach out to each other and achieve a better understanding.

This analysis will start by going back in history, where a shift in philosophical thinking has unfolded in favour of emotion, in reaction against the Enlightenment’s focus on reason. This further led to the longing for humanity through art and aesthetics, mainly during the romantic era, and subsequently to the development of an increasing emphasis on the unconscious.

It will be shown how, in a philosophical context, music fulfills both: Gadamer’s concept of aesthetics and hermeneutics, and Habermas’ ideas on the hermeneutics of intercultural communication. This will be exemplified by jazz, followed by two intercultural case studies. They will further illustrate the completeness of the hermeneutical experience through music and its transformational power.

The question as to the reason for this transformational effect will be elucidated by looking at the latest research on music, conducted in combination with areas such as sociology, biology, and psychology. As of recently, it provides the empirical evidence in answer to the questions whether connection through music is limited to certain individuals or whether it should be interpreted as

shared universal spirituality. From this it shall be concluded whether music could be relevant for intercultural understanding.

On the way to the thresholds of reason

In classical Greece, two forms of knowing were established: the knowing of eternal truths revealed by the gods (or in Plato, by virtue of man's intuition of pure knowledge), and knowledge through observation and application of logic. This constitutes the historical distinction between Thought and Emotion, which was taken up by the Enlightenment as the separation of Reason and Faith (Bruner, 1986: 108, 109). Thus, the Enlightenment sought to break away from dogmatic tradition by upholding universally reconstructable criteria through rational examination. However, ever since, it has unfolded as a process of searching for the limitations of human rationality (Honneth, 1987: 693).

Kant resumed the Greek line of thought, reinterpreting the difference between theoretical and practical reason, thereby exempting rationality from purely forming rules (Schnädelbach, 1998: 6-8). In his theory on 'productive imagination', Kant defends it as a bridge-builder between sensibility and intelligibility, or between sensual experience and rational-cognitive understanding (Dallmayr, 2002: 103, 104). Nevertheless, he remains throughout a defender of reason as the essentially human faculty (Solomon and Higgins, 1993: 2). As Gadamer points out in his essay on *Aesthetics and Hermeneutics*, Kant intellectualizes the pleasure of art by seeking a method for the determination of aesthetic judgement (Linge, 1976: 97).

Among the German Idealists and Kant's contemporaries, however, were several strong opponents of the Enlightenment, such as Jacobi and Hamann, who considered it "overly utilitarian and insufficiently attentive to spiritual matters". At the beginning of the 19th century, the romantics, led by Schelling, ushered in the downfall of the era of Enlightenment and the concept of pure reason was finally overturned with thinkers like Marx, Schopenhauer and Kierkegaard (Solomon, and Higgins, 1993: 2, 3).

Nietzsche later induced the perfection of the critique of reason which took place in the 20th century. He sustains that '*Angst*' limits consciousness, reducing the attention to one selected aspect, and preventing a transformation, or change in perspectives. He argues, however, that this valuative function of consciousness is what gives us the sensibility and receptive capacity to face the message that can be perceived in the discourse of the other, or in other presentations, like music, dance, paintings, the whole range of cultural objects (Dasilva, 1996: 18). This sensibility and receptive capacity was further explored by William James, the founder of modern empirical studies of consciousness, who observed that outside of consciousness lies the subliminal consciousness, containing everything non-conscious, from the instinctual to the spiritual, and that the subliminal conscious supplies the conscious with creative portents (Clarkson, 2001: 64, 65). From James' subliminal consciousness the idea of the unconscious evolved with Freud, who initiated the era of depth psychology, which also influenced artistic movements of the time.

Art as expression of humanity during Romanticism

In the process of questioning pure reason, the role of art as a means of expressing humanity was progressively voiced. During Romanticism, a prominent role was assigned to art. Its meaning was changed from human skill to imagination and creativity, elevating it to a special kind of truth ('imaginative truth') (Williams, 2009: XV). According to Gadamer, the shift had begun during the Enlightenment when, as scientific thinking moved towards exploring the unknown, presentation was replaced by experience, "[...] mediated by sculpture, and the pictorial arts, poetry, and above all, music" (Palmer, 2007: 207, 208).

In 19th century England, the romantics increasingly criticized the socio-economic consequences of progress during the Industrial Revolution. They turned against the aggressive individualism and industrial production which had instrumentalized man. They emphasized love and friendship, as

well as a general common humanity, “a mode of human experience and activity which the progress of society seemed increasingly to deny” (Williams, 1990: 39, 42).

The French romantic poet Victor Hugo wrote: “Music expresses that which cannot be put into words and cannot remain silent.” It was, however, German romantic literature that elevated music to the position of most romantic of the arts (Locke, 1972: 28). With the aim of freeing the art of music from purely intended and rational meaning, German Romanticism generated the concept of ‘absolute music’ by detaching it from language and having it stand on its own, therefore renouncing the meaning conveyed by language, or ‘reason’. Consequently, the German romantic metaphysics of art declared music a ‘language above language’. This line of thought was continued in the second half of the 19th century by Schopenhauer, Wagner and Nietzsche, who considered music as an expression of the ‘essence of things’. Nietzsche said, that “Without music, life would be an error.” Music was elevated by writers to a ‘language of a spirit world’, and the symphony was used as a prototype for absolute music (Dahlhaus, 1978: 3 - 11). Bowie (1992) mentions the famous review of Beethoven’s Fifth Symphony by German romantic writer and composer E.T.A. Hoffmann, in which he writes:

Music opens an unknown realm to man; a world that has nothing in common with the surrounding external world of the senses and in which he leaves behind all feelings which are determinable by concepts in order to devote himself to the unsayable. (cited in Bowie, 1992: 70, 71)

Hoffmann’s quote elucidates the realization of entering the unintelligible, a hermeneutical experience which demonstrates Gadamer’s point that, since German Romanticism, hermeneutics has assumed an altered and broadened form, thereby including aesthetics (Linge, 1976: 98 - 100), and thus music.

Gadamer's hermeneutics in art and Habermas' hermeneutics in intercultural communication

Hermeneutics in its earliest Greek form is to be understood as “[...] translating something unintelligible into the language everybody speaks and understands”. It brings something out of the world of the gods (its etymological origin coming from Hermes, the messenger of the gods), not the world of humans, or out of another world into one's own (Palmer, 2007: 44). It is in the work of Hans-Georg Gadamer, one of the most prominent defenders of the hermeneutical dialogue, that the communicative role of art finds its place within the modern philosophical discussion. In his essay on *Aesthetics and Hermeneutics* (1964), Gadamer maintains that “The universality of the hermeneutical perspective is all-encompassing [...] for only because the universal relatedness of being is concealed from human eyes does it need to be discovered” (cited in Linge, 1976: 103). He says, that since the time of German Romanticism hermeneutics reaches “as far as the expression of meaning as such” (ibid.: 98). The language of art (which includes the transitory art of music) carries an inexhaustible excess of meaning that distinguishes it from all translation into concepts. “[...] in comparison with all other linguistic and nonlinguistic tradition, the work of art is the absolute present for each particular present, and at the same time holds its word in readiness for every future.” (ibid.: 100 - 103). Gadamer even goes as far as to propose that the hermeneutical idea is fulfilled only by the experience of art (Palmer, 2007: 131). In practice, this idea seems to be alluded to by Gratier's and Apter-Danon's (2009) findings on musicality, in which they propose that “The meaning of connectedness attests to its aesthetic quality. [...] There may indeed be a strong link between our experience of belonging through ongoing dynamic communicative practices and the enjoyment of art” (Gratier and Apter-Danon, 2009: 313).

Since the purpose of this essay is to explore the hermeneutical quality of music in relation to intercultural dialogue, it seems important at this point to look at Jürgen Habermas' theory on the hermeneutics of intercultural communication.

Sölter (1993) suggests, that Habermas sees intersubjective understanding as the only alternative in order to avoid conflict, whereby the counterparts not only recognize but also respect their differences. In order to achieve this, Habermas draws from the precondition of ‘intact intersubjectivity’ (*unversehrte Intersubjektivität*) which creates symmetrical conditions of free reciprocal recognition. In his essay *Postmetaphysical Thinking (Postmetaphysisches Denken, 1988)*, the idea of ‘intact intersubjectivity’ generates a ‘communicative community of free and equal participants’ (*kommunikative Gemeinschaft aus Freien und Gleichen*), which is the vanishing point one has to keep coming back to in order to communicate at all. His idea focuses on universalism and the symmetry of dialogue partners, on their willingness to learn and change their perspectives, uncontaminated by power structures and pure strategic action (Sölter, 1993: 37, 38). In *A Berlin Republic (Die Normalität einer Berliner Republik, 1997)*, he further argues that intercultural understanding can only be achieved through complete symmetry, which allows for empathic understanding and therefore intercultural communication to take place (ibid.: 38).

Furthermore, in taking up Simmel’s ideas, that productive and innovative energy can result from the encounter with the Stranger, and that the exploration of the culturally unknown leads to a deeper understanding of one’s own cultural tradition, Habermas sustains that cultures regenerate themselves through the exchange ‘with Strangers and the Unfamiliar’ (*mit Fremden und Fremdem*) in order to mutually release their creative potentials (ibid.: 45, 46).

The intercultural hermeneutical dialogue in music

In the 19th century, the curiosity towards foreign music led some musicians, like Liszt and Dvorak, to incorporate foreign elements into their work. It was in the 20th century, however, that musicians have increasingly sought the unfamiliar as a creative source, soon realizing the vast creative potential through cross-cultural fertilization. This has resulted in many interesting musical projects, and produced new musical genres. But performers, composers and audiences did not only discover the enhanced creativity generated by the intercultural musical encounter, they also came to

experience the transcendental power of this hermeneutical dialogue which effortlessly crosses cultural and linguistic boundaries. This can be well illustrated by the example of jazz. During the first half of the 20th century, throughout the Western world, jazz was demonized as the ‘music of the black’¹. It was considered sinister and harmful, associated with crime, and regarded as the symbol of primitivism, animalism, evil, and a menace to Christianity and civilization (Merriam, 1971: 89). Until after WWII, it was denigrated by a white, Eurocentric culture, until jazz musicians started to revolutionize the Western notion of culture. As opposed to the existing culture of music, jazz was openly and interactive, and it assigned the audience an important and inclusive role, often obscuring its separation from the performers (Levine, 1989: 6,7). Furthermore, Gratier and Apter-Danon (2009) mention Duranti and Burrell (2004), who ascribe jazz a certain morality in its improvisational character that reinforces a shared aesthetics and “emerges from a personal commitment to authenticity, honesty and empathy or other-awareness” (Gratier, and Apter-Danon, 2009: 314). Therefore, the hermeneutical potential and intuitive multicultural inclusiveness is not surprising, as can be exemplified by the work and life of acclaimed Austrian jazz pianist Joe Zawinul (1932-2007).

After having exhausted his musical exploration of an emerging white jazz scene in post-war Vienna, he was drawn to the expression and intuition of black jazz and moved to the United States in 1959 (Baumann, 2002: 64). He started playing as the only white group member with some of the greatest black jazz musicians of the time, defying the rules of American racial segregation. In 1971 he founded his own band, *Weather Report*, with black saxophonist Wayne Shorter.

1 the terms ‘black’ and ‘white’ are being used here in reflection of the terminology at the time, since the politically correct versions ‘African American’ and ‘Caucasian American’ only came into use later.

In deciding whom to choose as band members, they picked musicians from different ethnic backgrounds and nationalities, consciously deciding to ignore linguistic barriers and rather base their collaboration on musical excellence and intuitive understanding (ibid.: 99-112). The same approach was later adopted when Zawinul founded his second band, *Zawinul Syndicate*.

Joe Zawinul outspokenly lived his conviction of cross-cultural inclusiveness by marrying an African American woman and refusing to perform in South Africa as long as the Apartheid regime was in place (ibid.: 67). The cultural cross-fertilization and innovative traits in his music brought jazz into a new era. By constantly seeking the unfamiliar and combining musical styles and the talent of musicians from different cultures, he became one of the forerunners of World Music. His naturally inclusive approach to people of the most varied ethnic and cultural backgrounds was conveyed to and inspired audiences worldwide.

The participants in musical hermeneutical communication

In the following sections, it shall be illustrated that musical experiences do have a transformational and strong communicative effect. In order to understand this phenomenon, it is worth anticipating the examples with some theoretical analysis. In examining the potential of music in terms of cross-cultural communication, the question arises: how far does the transformation and opening towards the Other extend? Is it limited to the musicians who play and perform together, engaging in a musical hermeneutical dialogue, which deepens their relationship? Is the cross-cultural learning from one another and seeing the other's perspective reserved to the interaction between musicians? The way in which audiences experience such performances would indicate that this is not the case. The hermeneutical dialogue during musical performance is not only clearly visible to them, but also perceivable at a deeper level. It sometimes triggers strong emotions, which would indicate that audiences could be an intrinsic part of the communicative process. Indeed, this is what Pavlicevic and Andsell (2009) seem to confirm: the musicians bring music to life at a certain time and space,

thus modelling a way of being with each other that is witnessed by the audience as a symbol of unity and diversity. The participatory listening of the audience draws out each person's musicality, and the participation of all elements (music piece, cast and audience) results in overall musical communication, forming a musical community. Therefore, the taking part in any way in musical activity includes listening. Intuitively, all know that the reason they are here is for a unique human experience of sympathy through the "universal activity of musicianship in action", which experts call 'musicing' (Pavlicevic and Andsell, 2009: 362, 368, 369).

Pavlicevic and Andsell (2009) refer to Bruce Benson (2003), who suggests that musicing is "an improvisational musical dialogue" that "results in a single musical-social system", which includes relationships between the music and the performers, between the performers and the audience, and between the audience members. What is obtained is overall musical communication, which Benson calls 'collaborative musicing' (ibid.: 362-368).

Intercultural dialogue through the experience of musicing

Jim Jordan's (2001) description of a literary and musical event shows the intensity of the musicing experience and the fruitful opening, in terms of intercultural dialogue, created by an artistic performance. The event took place at a conference held at the Goethe Institut in London in 1997, which had been organized in order to present the work of two representatives of immigrant literature in Germany.

Almost seamlessly the performance slipped between music and declamation, song and the spoken word, between the authors' own works, traditional songs and poems, frenetic pace and calmness, humour and deadly seriousness. After a while one ceased to register the transitions in language, form, delivery and content. [...] the overriding impression was one of harmony.

(Jordan, J. 2001: 33)

Jordan goes on to reflect on the transcendence beyond language and content, and its significance in the intercultural context:

The performance demonstrated how easily the boundaries we normally set to artistic productions may be transgressed without losing the essential nature of the experience. These boundaries are arbitrary and thus we can choose to establish new boundaries – or even none at all. [...]

If aesthetic and linguistic boundaries are so arbitrary, then the realisation can be carried over into our understanding of the interplay of cultures and of relations among groups within nations. If language as a marker of national or cultural identity can so easily become marginal to an artistic performance, then traditional cultural and linguistic boundaries would appear open to renegotiation. (ibid.: 34)

Finally, he concludes:

The performance [...] challenged fundamental assumptions about fixed identities [...] Its purpose was to give the audience a taste of how it might feel to live in a society where assumptions of superiority or inferiority played no role in cultural interchange. [...] perhaps [...] the recognition of the transitory and changing nature of society and the willingness to adapt to that change – in fact is the destination. The ‘way’ is therefore to release oneself from the shackles of one’s own culture, to find a meeting place with other cultures free of assumptions and ‘rationality’; a space where other cultures can simply be, where words flow into music, where one ceases to notice where one language begins and another ends, as if this was the most natural thing in the world; moving into a space of Akzeptanz, rather than existing as a representative of one culture in order to consume another. (ibid.: 34,35)

Aided by the power of aesthetics and music, Jordan’s account resonates with Habermas’ idea of intercultural hermeneutical dialogue, in which the participants seem to have been transported into a space free of power structures, based on symmetry and empathic understanding. In fact, this opening, as Jordan recounts, resulted in animated discussions that went beyond the time and space

of the conference. The dialogue continued afterwards, questions were returned to in an interview held a year later, and the initiated discussions produced an epistolary exchange which extended over a period of two years (ibid.: 35, 36).

The West-Eastern Divan Orchestra

There are countless intercultural musical projects that aim at sharing and exchanging perspectives, and at opening a cross-cultural dialogue. But since it would be too extensive to describe them all, one of the more prominent among them will be looked at in more detail.

With the aim of enabling a dialogue between cultures in the Middle East, the Jewish pianist and conductor Daniel Barenboim, along with Palestinian literary scholar Edward Said, founded the West-Eastern Divan Orchestra in 1999. It is composed of young musicians from Israel, Palestine and other Arab countries, such as Syria, Lebanon, Jordan and Egypt. The inspiration for the name came from a collection of Goethe's poems, written as an imaginary dialogue with the 14th century Persian poet Hafiz, published in 1819. According to Dallmayr (2002), the tenor of the Divan indicates Goethe's intention to counteract the clashes between cultures "through the cultivation of dialogue and mutual affection" (Dallmayr, 2002: 164). With this spirit in mind, Said and Barenboim embarked on their project, as described in Barenboim's book *Everything is Connected: The Power of Music* (2008): "Our intention in the workshop was to start a dialogue, to take a single step forward and to find common ground between estranged peoples" (Barenboim, 2008: 66). According to Edward Said, the project had humanistic reasons, since the musicians could experience equality within the orchestra, which was denied to them by politics: "This equality may just be the starting point from which to contemplate the prerequisites for coexistence, the first one being the ability to understand the other's history, preoccupations, and needs for existence and development" (Barenboim, 2008: 75). Barenboim describes the transformative effect of the experience for members of the orchestra:

With excitement we witnessed what happened when an Arab musician shared a music stand with an Israeli musician, both trying to play the same note with the same dynamic, the same stroke of the bow, the same sound, the same expression. [...] once the young musicians agreed on how to play even one note together they would not be able look at each other in the same way again. If, in music, they were able to carry on a dialogue by playing simultaneously, then ordinary verbal dialogue [...] would become considerably easier. (ibid.: 66)

Again, it becomes evident how this musical experiment complies with the conditions for creating an empathic opening in Habermas' sense of a communicational model of civilized intercourse: the abdication of violence, 'symmetric communication' by accepting the other as an equal partner in dialogue, and the willingness and capacity to learn and gain new insights from the other's information and perspectives (Sölter, 1996: 49).

The musical dialogue also fulfills the characteristics of Gadamer's non-instrumental hermeneutical dialogue, which is carried out "without arguing the other down but being guided by the subject matter and considering the other's perspective" (Dallmayr, 2002: 27). Barenboim describes this dialogical quality inherent in music by saying that, when playing music, one has to express oneself in order to contribute to the musical experience, but at the same time one has to listen to the others playing, whereby playing and listening simultaneously enhance one another (Barenboim, 2008: 65).

The West-Eastern Divan Orchestra's performances also help clarify the inclusion of the musical piece in the musicing process. The symbolism attached to the pieces that are played, the venues that are chosen, and the nature and scope of the project convey a strong message. In their essay on communicative musicality, Rodrigues, Rodrigues and Correia (2009) point out that our musical interpretation or invoked fantasy is not only formed by knowledge about music but also by everything associated with it, like the historical context, the style of the piece, emotional memories of past experiences that are triggered by the piece, affective and emotional reactions to the visual stimuli, and the performers' movements and actions. Our environmental stimuli help unfold

personal narratives (Rodrigues, Rodrigues and Correia, 2009: 606). The whole experience helps to unfold in each participant of the musicing process an opening at a deep level, which is conducive to seeing the other as '*concrete other*':

The West-Eastern Divan Orchestra is, of course, unable to bring about peace. It can, however, create the conditions for understanding without which it is impossible even to speak of peace. It has the potential to awaken the curiosity of each individual to listen to the narrative of the other and to inspire the courage necessary to hear what one would prefer not to. Then, having heard the unspeakable, it may become possible at the very least to accept the legitimacy of the other's point of view. (Barenboim, 2008: 73, 74)

Latest findings in research on music

After having explored the profound and transformational effects of music on human beings in the intercultural context, questions remain as to whether the connectedness felt through musical experience comes down to an intuitive universal spirituality. Or could it be seen as a phenomenon limited to a group of privileged human beings endowed with a particular aesthetic sensitivity and capacity for reflection? The latest research now seems to have gained empirical evidence which provides us with answers.

Since the mid-1990s, social psychology and music sociology are focusing more on the social and ecological perspectives of music in the shared and cultural context. Tia de Nora's (2000, 2003) sociology of music is heralding on the idea of how social life is penetrated by music at different levels, and the so-called 'new musicology' is looking at biological and sociological conceptions of musical events (Pavlicevic and Andsell, 2009: 360, 372).

The findings that offer a groundbreaking basis for these areas seem to be Malloch's and Trevarthen's (2009) findings on protomusicality. They introduce their theory by explaining that in infant research the phenomena of non-verbal communication between young infants and their

mothers are referred to as 'protoconversation', 'attunement' and 'acts of meaning' (Malloch and Trevarthen, 2009: 1). They suggest that babies have an innate intersubjectivity. The delicate expressions and sensitive responses between mother and child are described "in terms of rhythmic patterns of engagement that could be represented as 'musical' or 'dance-like'", which Trevarthen calls 'communicative musicality' (ibid.: 2, 4, 1). Malloch and Trevarthen (2009) ascribe to this musicality an expression of a human desire for cultural learning, which includes the universal narratives of the conversation between a mother and her baby, or wordless emotional and motivational narratives beneath a conversation (ibid.: 4). Thus, Pavlicevic and Andsell suggest, that according to Trevarthen, by entering the musical culture through their natural talent for the 'outward signs of human communication', babies develop a 'sympathetic human company' through the 'musical coordination of minds in time', which results in 'musical companionship'. This is what motivates the learning of culture-related skills (Pavlicevic and Andsell, 2009: 360).

Furthermore, Rodrigues, Rodrigues and Correia (2009) refer to Trevarthen's findings that a baby's preverbal, non-verbal communication which has a musical nature from the start and serves to express its will and experience, is part of the process of growing language. As a consequence, they deduce that language and music share common aspects because they develop from the same source: the deep need and skill to communicate. The authors believe that this phenomenon is biological and universal, (Rodrigues, Rodrigues and Correia, 2009: 606) therefore common to all humans.

Following the analysis of all these aspects, Rodrigues, Rodrigues and Correia (2009) conclude, that

[...] in musical communication every kind of human participant [...] share[s] meaning in a way

that is beyond conscious awareness, and that reveals (or discovers) bodily structures of experience.

[...] it is also evident that musical communication between performer and audience at a professional

level, and infant-mother communication in more intuitively musical ways, are essentially of the

same nature. (ibid.: 608)

Conclusion

As a speaker at a seminar entitled 'Your Brain & Music', held on April 17th, 2010 in Dublin, Daniel Levitin, a noted American psychologist, neuroscientist and musician, said that "Music connects us to our true self". Reflecting on this and on the findings above, we realize that in experiencing our 'true self' during the process of musicing we are able to shed our persona ('mask' in Latin), or what we *represent*, by letting emerge to the surface who we truly *are*. By becoming part of the same, equal (musical) 'social system', we are freed from diverging social and cultural constraints, and power structures. Through the language of music, narratives are perceived beyond the spoken word, and the idea of encountering a concrete other seems more natural. We are able to experience 'otherness' as the 'other' of our own selves, and a 'fusion of horizons' seems to become more tangible.

Ultimately, it is our biologically conditioned, universally shared 'communicative musicality' which brings us closer, and evens the ground to face one another, in order to enter into a verbal dialogue about our differences. Through this transformative process, we do experience *metanoia*. It provides us with the conditions under which it would seem possible to conduct a complex cultural dialogue within 'norms of friendship, love and care'.

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