Process and Product in Theology and Musical Aesthetics: Improvisation as Interdisciplinary *Topos*

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Two Theological Approaches to Temporality

In the course of the development of Western culture, the ideas of Plato have wielded enormous influence. One of Plato's most influential ideas is his particular conception of truth. For Plato, truth exists in a different realm of reality from ourselves, a realm unlike the things we see around us in space and time. Truth consists of ideal being or ideal essences, subsisting in what he called the world of the forms.

Outside the flux of time, Plato's forms are both timeless and eternal. Ultimate truth, the highest ground of being, lies in these eternal forms. This claim had an important corollary. Because these eternal forms alone fully existed, Plato had little interest in the human world of time and change. For him, all knowledge derived from our human world was fleeting and corruptible. To access the truth residing in the forms, all contingent, temporal and historical dimensions had to be set aside.

The general sense of Platonism – to put it succinctly – is that truth is not really here. Truth is somewhere else. Though it makes an appearance among us, truth is ultimately ensconced in superhuman ideas or forms. Over the centuries this Platonic philosophy embedded itself in the Western psyche. It will be seen below that this philosophy has exerted major influence within Christian theology. It has also exerted major influence on the Western understanding of the musical work especially, perhaps, from the nineteenth century.

The Jewish people had a more optimistic view of the nature of history. They believed that history, the flow of time, change and contingency were the very means to truth. In the Hebrew Scriptures, because history is the *locus* of God's guiding action on behalf of His chosen people through the centuries, history is where truth is discovered and worked out. History is not, as it was for Plato, a veil between humans and the truth. So, while Plato left Western thought with a negative attitude to time and history, Jewish ideas of history bequeathed a more positive understanding. For Plato we have to journey to a reality beyond time, whereas for the Jewish tradition we are born in and remain within a reality which is linear and temporal, because God has a purpose for Israel, and was characteristically a 'God who wrought mighty deeds in history'.[1]

Plato's Supreme God (*Laws*, 905 B-906), while indeed looking after the human world of time and change, does so at a remove, by means of the mediating

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[1] G.W. Anderson, *The History and Religion of Israel* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1966): 179.

agency of lesser deities. However, in the Hebrew Scriptures from *Genesis* on, the God of the Jews is depicted as establishing direct covenantal relations with His people at certain historical stages of their development, and He defines Himself precisely in His capacity as the God who acts for them in history: 'I am the Lord who brought you out from Ur of the Chaldees to give you this land to occupy' (Gen. 15: 7). As a result:

> [k]nowledge of the living God gave Israel a feeling for history. Here Israel stands alone in the ancient East. This tiny people … produced historical writing which was completely unique. Other people, no doubt, had their stories and their annals. But Israel alone had a sense of the deeper background of the facts and of their inter-connection. Israel's interest came from the conviction that the living God was at work in history.[2]

If God acted in history, then (by contrast with Plato's thought) history was validated as a revelatory medium in which God was encountered. A 'Hebraic preference for the historical category of becoming over the ontological category of being (which predominated in Hellenic culture)'[3] was reflected in Hebraic religious practice. The characteristic question for Jews was not 'Who is God?' (indeed, it was not even permissible to utter God's name) but 'How do we follow God?':

> The main emphasis … is not on knowledge *about* God but on the *imitation* of God. This imitation is to be attempted by following the right way of living, which is called *halakhah*. The word has its root in the word 'to walk'. *Halakhah* means, then, the way in which one walks; this way leads to an ever-increasing approximation of God's actions.[4]

The Christian tradition continues the Hebraic tradition of the one God acting decisively within history. Yet, despite its deep roots in Jewish culture, Christian theological discourse became for a long time concerned mainly with Platonic frameworks for articulating truth. Ideas such as 'being', 'substance', 'form' and 'essence' long constituted the typical mode in which theology was written, and these words were deeply imbued with timeless Platonism, because they referred to non-contingent and atemporal ideas. Recently, however, Christian theology has been increasingly concerned with rediscovering the importance of ideas such as 'becoming', 'process', 'time' and 'history'. What follows will describe this theological retrieval of temporal and historical notions of truth from out of the previous dominance of Platonic notions with their negative evaluation of historicity. This will lead in turn into a discussion of how musical aesthetics has also partaken of a retrieval of temporal and historical dimensions. In short, both Western theology and Western music have operated with, but are gradually overcoming, a paradigm of temporal process as contaminant. The following discussion will be an interdisciplinary conversation, which the present writer

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[2]   *A New Catechism: The Catholic Faith for Adults, with Supplement* (London: Search Press, 1970): 41.

[3]   Richard Kearney, *The Wake of Imagination: Toward a Postmodern Culture* (London: Routledge, 1994): 51.

[4]   Erich Fromm, *You Shall Be As Gods: A Radical Interpretation of the Old Testament* (Fawcett, 1966): 141. Cited in Kearney, *Wake*, 50.

will conduct in his capacity as a Benedictine monk with a background in both theology and musicology.

Beginning with the issues arising from recent Christian theology, it may be observed how, for example, ideas of temporality are currently being brought to bear anew on the familiar idea of a timeless God. A timeless God is not found anywhere in the Hebrew Scriptures nor the New Testament, and hardly appears before Augustine. A timeless God is unlike the God revealed in the Hebrew Scriptures, who was in constant interaction with humans, affected by humans, and involved in the moment-by-moment historical drama of humanity. Thus God walks and talks with Adam and Eve in the cool of evening (Gen. 3: 8–19); God stalks Moses in order to kill him (Ex. 4: 24). Though Jews believed in God's fidelity to His inner nature, a kind of personal consistency, they did not think that God was timeless. The timeless God comes into Christian tradition later as a result of Platonic influences. A good medieval example of timeless divinity may be found in St Anselm, who addresses God thus: 'Yesterday you were not, nor will you be tomorrow, but yesterday, today and tomorrow you are. You do not exist yesterday nor today nor tomorrow. You are altogether outside all time.'[5] What Anselm prays to is recognizably much more like one of Plato's forms than anything described in the Bible.

Theologians are nowadays rejuvenating the ancient and Jewish idea of God's temporality, mostly in relation to ideas of divine suffering. While Christianity always held that God suffers with humanity in the Person of the earthly Jesus, recent theology also asks whether God suffers with us in His transcendent Godhead. Jürgen Moltmann is a major exponent of a theology of the suffering, temporal Godhead. Moltmann writes: 'A God who is incapable of suffering is a being who cannot be involved. [Human] suffering and injustice do not affect him … But the one who cannot suffer cannot love either. So he is also a loveless being.'[6] To this it could be added that, if God is represented as existing wholly apart from time, this arguably denies that God is a Person, as Christian tradition has maintained.

Another way in which temporal and historical aspects have been retrieved in recent theology is in understanding how God's truth is revealed to the Church. Christianity is still struggling to emerge from a period in which the words of Scripture and the doctrines of the Church were often understood with little attention to the historical contexts that produced them, and the changing contexts in which they have subsequently to be interpreted. Here, too, the unstated assumption was the Platonic model of the timelessness of truth, rather than truth as revealed in a historical process.

However, with the growth of modern hermeneutics, it is realized increasingly that scriptural or doctrinal words are not handed on like intact bricks. For Hans Küng: 'Language is not a static structure but a dynamic event, embedded in the flux of the whole history of man and the world … Language is always on the way to reality, a basic phenomenon of man's historicity.'[7] This perspective helps to guard against a spurious reverentialism, which might seem to invite a static, and ultimately idolatrous, notion of biblical and doctrinal language as poised outside the flux of time.

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[5]   Anselm of Canterbury, *Proslogion*, IXX.
[6]   Jürgen Moltmann, *The Crucified God* (London: SCM, 1974): 222.
[7]   Hans Küng, *Infallible? An Enquiry* (London: Collins, 1971): 131.

The word of divine revelation does not live in a Platonic world of forms in this way. As Raymond Brown observes:

> Only human beings use words; and so, when one has entitled divine communication 'word of God,' one has already indicated that the divine communication is in human words, and therefore that the communication is in a time-conditioned and limited form.[8]

As he points out, 'only a believer who insists on such limitations holds that the Bible is the *word* of God'.[9]

Walter Kasper writing in the 1960s summed up well the resurgent sense of historicity. He wrote:

> We already have a new outlook on being, which … has come to regard freedom, time and history as the most comprehensive framework. In this outlook, we are not dealing with accidental changes in a perduring system of essences; on the contrary, nature and being only become real within the all-embracing cloak of history.[10]

This quotation captures well the two understandings of truth being contrasted in the present discussion. Kasper refers on one hand to a static and Platonic 'system of essences'. In relation to these essences, temporality would appear as something 'accidental' and contingent. Kasper also refers the reader to the newer more historical view, where what he calls the 'all-embracing cloak of history' furnishes humanity with the basic structure of reality itself because it is the place where 'nature and being … become real'.[11]

Where, if anywhere, was the historico-temporal character of Christian experience retained, while both theology and the epistemology of revelation were awash with Platonism? At the bedrock level represented by prayer, human engagement with God has always remained stubbornly historical. God sometimes withdraws all sense of His presence from the person who prays, who is left in aridity with nothing left to contemplate. At this point, contemplative knowledge of God is lost. Yet the believer still yearns for God, and God remains faithful to the believer. The believer is left only with trust in God's fidelity, and a ticking clock, as he or she awaits God's return in consolation or inner vision. In and through the waiting, believers who encounter such spiritual trials, aridity or depression, re-discover existentially the bedrock of historicity which founds all Christian experience. Perhaps they might otherwise never realize the historical as well as visionary nature of Christian fidelity, the unavoidable dialectic of trust and sight.

Prayer thus reminds Christian believers of a deeper wisdom than theology, namely that they can sometimes have *theos* without *logos*, through the existential medium of a temporal fidelity sustained between themselves and God. In spiritual aridity, Christians are far removed from experiencing God in any Platonic contemplation of the image. They do, however, re-encounter two

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[8] Raymond Brown, *The Critical Meaning of the Bible* (New York: Paulist Press, 1981): 21.

[9] Brown, *Critical Meaning*, 22.

[10] Walter Kasper, *The Methods of Dogmatic Theology* (Shannon: Ecclesia Press, 1969): 55.

[11] See also the Second Vatican Council, 'Pastoral Constitution on the Church in the Modern World (*Gaudium et Spes*)', section 5: '[M]ankind substitutes a dynamic and more evolutionary concept of nature for a static one, and the result is an immense series of new problems calling for a new endeavour and synthesis.'

important Jewish motifs: the shattering of images of God, and the centrality of trust in divine faithfulness set within the context of ongoing history.

Two Approaches to Temporality in Musical Analysis

The Platonic urge to dehistoricize musical experience into a timeless essence of itself is no less well demonstrated than the urge to essentialize and dehistoricize Christian revelation. To look no further than traditional practices of musical analysis, what is analysed has generally been the written musical text. There has been little or no interest shown in analysing the musical event as it is experienced in time, it being widely assumed that time adds nothing significant to what is available on the page. This approach is of course rather like analysing a biblical passage or a Church teaching without examining its historical context. Yet, as was seen above, biblical and Church teaching derive their meaning from their historical context. Likewise, the sound of a piece of music as it takes place in time is the primary and historical event. The written musical text which is analysed is nothing but a dehistoricized trace of that primary temporal experience.

A great deal is lost to theological understanding with the ahistorical 'interpretation' of a biblical or doctrinal text. Likewise, when an ahistorical textual surrogate is preferred to a genuine, temporal musical experience, a great deal is lost to musical understanding. Some important musical experiences are not found in the text.

What experiences are these? Here is one example. A new and unfamiliar piece of music unfolds for us moment by moment. Not knowing what is coming next is a powerful part of our pleasure in the new piece. Typical of this temporal listening process is the pleasure of waiting for whether the composer affirms or contradicts our expectations, as well as the pleasure of participating in the music's unfolding emotional life. An ahistorical approach to music cannot capture these experiences. Yet it is just such an ahistorical approach that the Western tradition of textual musical analysis holds up as a valid analysis of the music.

According to the terms of this analysis, music only possesses objective integrity, or full presence, when encountered as a finished product – indeed, a finished product distilled also into a timeless, quasi-Platonic textual substitute. While the music is unfolding, it is held to be not yet fully present and therefore not yet analysable. Yet, psychologically, we all know how intensely present and real a musical work is to us as it unfolds. A first listening is sometimes the most enjoyable listening. Moreover, when we listen to music, we are generally not conscious of waiting for the end as our main concern. Indeed, we may even enjoy the unfolding so much that we do not *want* the music to end. We are certainly not waiting for the musical object to become whole before we experience it. Yet, in analysis, it is the timeless, ahistorical, whole text – something like a Platonic 'form' of the music – that is accorded reality and analysed, while, again echoing Plato's essentialism, the historical, aural experience is treated as a kind of residue. We even use the word 'music' in a Platonizing way to refer not to the sound produced by the musical event but to its notated exemplar. 'Do you have your music?' means 'Do you have your musical text?'

Jerrold Levinson adds weight to this point when he argues that most modern Western listeners like to listen to music from moment to moment and that they are not interested, in the first instance at least, in any overall holistic or architectonic aspect of the music. Their interest is in the process. The principal

cognitive experience of the listener, he suggests, apprehends music chiefly in terms of its temporal flow rather than its overall design.[12] This account of how we listen goes back at least as far as Edmund Gurney's *The Power of Sound* (1880) as well as the writings of Oliveria Prescott.[13] Contrast this temporal mode of musical appreciation with the way we experience painting or architecture. In painting or architecture we normally see the whole object first and then peruse the details in the second instance. With music, we first hear details unfolding in time, and arrive only secondly at the whole thing.

Yet traditional musical analysis has reversed the testimony of musical experience and put the whole object in prior place. It treats music like painting or architecture. Thinkers such as Lawrence Ferrara have, however, proposed new approaches to analysis that support an understanding of the temporal experience of music.[14] Without excluding what is of value in the textual approach, Ferrara's proposed analytical strategy ('eclectic analysis')[15] seeks to arrive at a more comprehensive understanding, including the experience of music as heard. Jean-Jacques Nattiez also notes: 'The question of musical narrativity, while by no means new, is making a comeback as the order of the day in the field of musicological thought.'[16] This perspective from narrativity likewise has the capacity to highlight a sense of the temporal unfolding of music.

The 'Long Nineteenth Century' as *locus classicus*

The Western analytical preoccupation with reconceiving music as text is only a consequence of a more grandiose Platonization in modern Western music. This is the cultural shift in modern Europe to the distinctively modern Western idea of the musical work. Although Western musical culture seems always to have operated with some idea of the musical work or discrete composition, some time after the late 1700s the musical work came increasingly to be understood as an object that had to be considered as separate from everyday contexts, and able be contemplated for its own sake,[17] rather like a Platonic form, in fact. One result of the rise of the work understood in this sense was the rise of a new idea of musical classics. William Weber writes:

> In the year 1700 it would have seemed more than mildly ludicrous to put on regular public concerts offering only music more than twenty or so years old … Yet in

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[12]   See Jerrold Levinson, *Music in the Moment* (Ithaca, NY: Cornell University Press, 1997): 13–14.

[13]   See Oliveria Prescott, 'About Music, and What it is Made of', *Musical Times* 45/732 (1 Feb. 1904); 'Musical Design, a Help to Poetic Intention', *Proceedings of the Royal Musical Association*, *18th Session* (1891–92): 121–34; *Form or Design in Music, Instrumental and Vocal* (New York: Best Books, 2001).

[14]   See Lawrence Ferrara, *Philosophy and the Analysis of Music: Bridges to Musical Sound, Form and Reference* (New York: Greenwood, 1991): xiii.

[15]   For a description of this methodology, see Ferrara, *Philosophy*, 181–6.

[16]   Jean-Jacques Nattiez, 'Can One Speak of Narrativity in Music?', *Journal of the Royal Musical Association* 115/2 (1990): 240–57; 240.

[17]   See Lydia Goehr, *The Imaginary Museum of Musical Works: An Essay in the Philosophy of Music* (Oxford: Clarendon, 1992): 173–4.

1776 a group of noblemen founded just such a musical society, the proudly back-ward-looking Concert of Antient music.[18]

Weber adds: 'Music had no canon or classics before the eighteenth century … Works were composed, used, and discarded.'[19] One might express this otherwise by saying that works were not elevated above, but remained subject to, historical process.

The dating of this movement towards the musical work's transcendence of history is a matter of interpretative nuance. Dahlhaus claims that it was first Beethoven for whom 'a musical text, like a literary or a philosophical text, harbors a meaning which is made manifest but not entirely subsumed in its acoustic presentation … an "art work of ideas" transcending its various interpretations'.[20] Dahlhaus contrasts this approach with the more conservative understanding of Rossini for whom the score apparently remained 'a mere recipe for a performance', where 'the performance … forms the crucial aesthetic arbiter as the realization of a draft rather than an exegesis of a text. Rossini's musical thought hinged on the performance as an event, not on the work as a text passed down and from time to time given acoustical "explications".'[21]

What can be claimed with certainty, however, is that the notion of music residing in a kind of dehistoricized essence of musical experience owed much to the philosophy of Kant. For Kant, all artworks are defined as being removed from the history of ordinary life, and are attended to with 'an attitude independent of any motivation to do with utility, economic value, moral judgements … and concerned with experiencing the object "for its own sake"'.[22] This theory of the 'autonomous' artwork is propounded in Kant's *Critique of Judgement* (1790). While previously music had been written mostly for specific uses and occasions – pageants, national events, civic presentations, domestic festivities – after Kant this ideal waned. What now became prized was not socially situated creativity in music. Instead, music was increasingly considered under the new and dehistoricized category of the autonomous work, an idea leading finally to the curious notion of 'art for art's sake' first developed in Victor Cousin's lectures of 1836, and published as *Du vrai, du beau et du bien* in 1853. Cousin's ideology produced the still popular notion of the artist as kind of '"bird of paradise", a romantic soul yearning to express some purely private vision of the self'.[23]

This view of the artwork is the reason why, nowadays in the West, we set aside particular periods of time for appreciating music and why music is so often sequestered in places such as concert halls. Like Plato's forms, such places are 'outside' life. Compare some other cultures, where music is seen as integral with life itself, not expressed in isolatable 'works' separate from the general run of life. Thus '[t]he communal music of African peoples … with its ties to … tribal

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[18]   William Weber, *The Rise of Musical Classics in Eighteenth-Century England: A Study in Canon, Ritual and Ideology* (Oxford: Clarendon, 1992): 1.

[19]   Weber, *Musical Classics*, 2.

[20]   Carl Dahlhaus, *Nineteenth-Century Music* (Berkeley: California University Press, 1989): 10.

[21]   Dahlhaus, *Nineteenth-Century Music*, 9.

[22]   C. Janaway, 'Aesthetic Attitude', in *The Oxford Companion to Philosophy*, ed. Ted Honderich (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1995): 8.

[23]   David Tracy, *The Analogical Imagination: Christian Theology and the Culture of Pluralism* (London: SCM Press, 1981): 12.

conviviality, often goes on for hours without interruption; it does not comprise "pieces".'[24]

There is a similarity between the rise of these Western, nineteenth-century ahistorical models for understanding music, and the growth of certain ahistorical models in theology at the same period. One example of the latter is the scholastic theology which Roman Catholicism vigorously rejuvenated during the later nineteenth century, with its static dehistoricized categories. Strictly Aristotelian rather than Platonic, the underlying principle of ahistorical fixity or substantialism, the soothing reduction of everything to static essences, was nevertheless the same. This 'neo'-scholastic theology, as it was called, was based on supposedly changeless concepts, and was presented as an unrevisable map of reality. It had no sense of 'intelligibility as it reveals itself through historical expressions'[25] and it presumed that theological or philosophical ideas can remain valid expressions of truth only if unconditioned by time and culture. Indeed, neo-scholastic philosophical categories were generally regarded as somehow timelessly inseparable from human reason itself.

Another example of how a timeless ideal became influential in theology in the late nineteenth century is fundamentalist Protestantism with its ahistorical approach to the biblical text. The term 'fundamentalist' was coined at the American Biblical Congress in New York in 1895. Fundamentalism removes the Bible from history, treating its words as somehow timeless. God's word in Scripture is preserved in a Platonic realm and human intelligence is effaced as a historically situated interpretative medium.

Both these theological mentalities practise an evasion of the untidiness of history in the pursuit of a trans-temporal and contemplative ideal of epistemological perfection. They both do with theology something similar to what the Kantian autonomous work does with the work of art, removing its connection with social contexts and historical processes. The nineteenth century is in fact highly ambivalent in its attitudes here, in the sense that it was also a period of unique impetus in historical studies and historical sensibility. There is a tension which runs through the century's aesthetics, between a rising historical sensibility on one hand, and a fascination with the essential, the integral, the organic on the other. It was this perceived tension between historical and absolute which Hegel tried to resolve by making history the very expression of an 'all-embracing rational spirit, rational precisely in its factual manifestation'.[26] Indeed, 'what is distinctive about Hegel is that he views the historical process itself as the means whereby truth or meaning is actually brought into being'.[27]

A Case Study: Musical Improvisation

Simultaneously with the exaltation of the autonomous musical artwork, upheld ideologically by its Platonizing and atemporal underpinning, another way

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[24]   Lee Konitz, 'All the Things "All the Things You Are" Is', in *Jazz Text: Voice and Improvisation in Poetry, Jazz, and Song*, ed. Charles O. Hartman (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 1991): 9.

[25]   Gerald A. McCool, *Catholic Theology in the Nineteenth Century: The Quest for a Unitary Method* (New York: Seabury, 1977): 264.

[26]   Hans Urs von Balthasar, *A Theology of History* (San Francisco: Ignatius, 1994): 11.

[27]   Martin Henry, 'G.W.F. Hegel: A Secularized Theologian?' *Irish Theological Quarterly* 70/3 (2005): 195–214; 198.

in which the nineteenth century reflected denigration of the historical and temporal in music was by stigmatizing the music generally called improvisation. Improvisation is embedded in a special way in temporal process. No score normally results from improvisation. The improvisational product is nothing other than the improvisational process itself, in other words, a temporal phenomenon.

As late as the mid-eighteenth century, C.P.E. Bach had seen composition and improvisation as going hand in hand. He wrote: 'I believe that one can predict with assurance a good future in composition for anyone with a good head for improvisation.'[28] For him, improvisatory skill hones compositional skill, and is, among other things, a space where composers try out ideas and begin to create.

However, with the subsequent rise of the ideology of the autonomous artwork, improvisation was destined to lose this acknowledged connection with the composing process. In the nineteenth century it was increasing felt that

> [t]he finer composer should be capable of elaborating the work of music solely in his head, and ought not to need the crutch of trying it out at the keyboard … We have here an interesting aesthetic prejudice: the work of music should be conceived not directly in material sound, but as an abstract form.[29]

'Schumann, in particular, felt ashamed of his reliance on the piano for inspiration.'[30] Composition came to be understood more and more as the attainment of an idea rather than the outcome of a process. Thus, Schopenhauer believed that the intellectual contemplation of the composer subconsciously received Platonic forms or ideas, distilling them into the form of the musical work, and he held that this ideation was a more potent factor in composing than any preparatory processes.[31] For him, all aesthetic experience was a deliverance from the mundane history of daily life, 'an occasional consolation for and release from the endless striving and suffering of the will'.[32]

What is seen here is an ideological shift away from valuing creative process towards valuing creative vision, a turning from history to the contemplation of the form. In an analogous way after the 1830s[33] there was seen a gradual removal of improvisation from the proliferating new concert halls.[34] Concert halls were temples consecrated to the modern, autonomous, 'Platonic' and formal artwork. Improvisations, infested with temporal process, could not share this prestigious space, whose status was further bolstered by the rising prosperity and more confident identity of the new bourgeoisie.

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[28]   C.P.E. Bach, *Versuch über die wahre Art das Clavier zu spielen* (Berlin: 1753): ii, 325–6.

[29]   Charles Rosen, 'On Playing the Piano', *The New York Review of Books* 46/16 (21 Oct. 1999): 49–54; 51.

[30]   Rosen, 'On Playing', 51.

[31]   See Dale Jacquette, 'Schopenhauer's Metaphysics of Appearance and Will in the Philosophy of Art', in *Schopenhauer, Philosophy and the Arts*, ed. Dale Jacquette (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1996): 15.

[32]   Malcolm Budd, *Music and the Emotions: The Philosophical Theories* (London: Routledge, 1992): 85.

[33]   See Janet Ritterman, 'Piano Music and the Public Concert, 1800–1850', in *The Cambridge Companion to Chopin*, ed. Jim Samson (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1992): 25–6.

[34]   See Dennis Libby, 'Improvisation: Western after 1800', in Imogene Horsley, Michael Collins, Eva Badura-Skoda and Dennis Libby, 'Improvisation 1', in *The New Grove Dictionary of Music and Musicians*, vol. 9, ed. Stanley Sadie (London: Macmillan, 1980): 50.

Improvisatory practices in the nineteenth century are documented increasingly in domestic contexts and *salons*. It was in such environments that Chopin and Liszt enthralled their hearers with improvisatory skill. Though improvisation had certainly not ceased to exist, it was ushered away from the concert halls where the autonomous works were celebrated. Chopin and Liszt also sought to capture the aesthetic essence of improvisation in many of their published works (for example Chopin's Impromptus). This desire to capture the flavour of the improvisatory through the paradoxical goal of 'written-out improvisation' is itself indicative of a contemporary notion that the mystique of the improvisatory benefited from being translated into fully notated works – improvisation thereby doing homage to the work. Liszt may also have been influenced by the literary, poetic cult of the *improvisatore* or *improvisatrice*,[35] an influence that came through his extensive reading.[36] It has been suggested that the literary and poetic *improvisatore* or *improvisatrice* enjoyed a paradoxical social identity, being regarded simultaneously as a social deviant and an admired artist.[37] Similar connotations may therefore have attached to the musical improviser. In short, the richness of the nineteenth century's improvisatory tradition, both in music and in poetry, needs to be understood as inhabiting an exotic cultural underground. Improvisatoriness survived obliquely as a kind of institutionalized 'other' of the literary or musical work.

An important part of this marginalizing of improvisation consisted in consolidating and emphasizing its very description as 'improvisation'. Previous eras certainly used the word 'improvisation', but people were just as likely to use terms such as 'free fantasia' or 'toccata' to refer to the same general notion. The latter terms are more extensive than the term 'improvisation' in the sense that they refer to compositional genres which *per se* invite some integration of authentic improvisational activity into the performance of an otherwise fully notated composition. Significantly, they convey an idea of the composed work as partially improvisatory, of improvisation and composition braided together. The role of the performer in these styles was to use an improvisational inventiveness on the text, not just to reproduce the text.

However, the ideology of the Kantian autonomous artwork could not conceive of actual improvisation as inhabiting a musical work. For Kantian thought, the parts of a piece of music are so linked, that the whole piece would collapse if even one note, rhythm or chord were to be altered. The performance of the Kantian work is thus marked by hyper-preparation. Consequently, in terms of how things might be described from a Kantian perspective, the word 'improvisation', which comes from *improvisus*, meaning 'unprepared' (and has virtually the same form in English, French, German and Italian) emerged as increasingly valuable. It became the strong lexical candidate for designating whatever was

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[35]   See Caroline Gonda, 'The Rise and Fall of the Improvisatore, 1753–1845', *Romanticism* 6/2 (2000): 195–210.

[36]   '[Germaine] de Staël's novel *Corinne, ou l'Italie* (1807) did more than any other work to popularize the idea of the improvisatore or improvisatrice.' Gonda, 'Rise and Fall', 198. On Liszt's familiarity with de Staël's work see Liszt's letter no. 127 (1875) in Howard E. Hugo, ed., *The Letters of Franz Liszt to Marie zu Sayn-Wittgenstein* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1953): 196; also Liszt's letter no. 89 to Lilla von Bulyovszky (1856) in Margit Prahács, ed., *Franz Liszt: Briefe aus Ungarischen Sammlungen 1835–1886* (Basel: Bärenreiter Kassel, 1966): 92.

[37]   See Angela Esterhammer, 'The Improviser's Disorder: Spontaneity, Sickness and Social Deviance in Late Romanticism', *European Romantic Review* 16/3 (Jul. 2005): 329–40; 330.

antithetical to the hyper-prepared performance of the hyper-prepared Kantian work. Eventually, in the nineteenth century a hard-edged work/improvisation binarism would emerge. Its result was that improvisation, still a proud and often composition-related skill in C.P.E. Bach's era, was culturally demoted to being the 'other' of the more esteemed work. The prepared work had now become the paradigmatic genre. Improvisation became its opposite. The word 'improvisation' would ever after be heard in negative tones.

These are the circumstances in which the word 'improvisation' is inherited by modern musicology. Musicologists might wish to question the value of their inheritance. The word 'improvisation' arose long before critical musicology was conceived. It continues to distort understanding, not least because its modern usage is unconsciously impelled by nineteenth-century ideology.

First: the word 'improvisation' purports to be a describer, but a word which thus identifies something by negation risks either failing to identify its object or identifying it merely in an attenuated or unfocused way. Thus 'horseless carriage' hardly gives us any idea of a motor car. 'Improvisation', following the 'horseless carriage' idiom, likewise defines what it describes as a not-something rather than a something. The nineteenth century had no motive to contest this negative connotation, since, as we saw, it indeed wanted to think of improvisation as a not-something. It wanted to think of it as not-a-work.

Second: while some music may be viewed as less, more or differently prepared in relation to an underlying musical culture, it is arguably meaningless to call any music '*un*prepared'. Even 'improvised' music is culturally prepared by existing stylistic assumptions of some kind, otherwise it would be a random jumble of sound and not music at all. Moreover, specific forms of preparation traditionally enrich so-called improvisation; elaborate pedagogies surround practices such as figured-bass realization and jazz improvisation. Music falsely called 'improvised' by Western culture is not really unprepared at all, but only differently prepared from the fully scored Kantian work, and, of course, that is precisely the point. Not characterized by thoroughgoing textual preparation in the Kantian mould, it is condemned lexically to the mythological realm of the unprepared, by means of an all-or-nothing binarism applied to ideas of musical production. If the composed work is characterized by thoroughgoing preparation, so runs the Kantian assumption, then what is not a composed work has no preparation. This exaggerated dichotomy still echoes the interests of the nineteenth century, when it emerged to protect and hedge about the hallowed identity of the fully prepared work.

This nineteenth-century fiction that if music is not scored like a Western work then it is wholly unprepared facilitated a colonial discourse long into the twentieth century. Many twentieth-century Western books on music contain phrases such as 'world-wide, most music is improvised', meaning simply that it uses no notation. The designation 'improvisation' with its sense of unpreparedness had come to be used as shorthand for musical products that could not be regarded as produced in accepted Western, that is to say notated, ways.[38] However, much

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[38] This point was made very effectively by Laudan Nooshin in her paper 'The Composition/Improvisation Debate: Power, Difference and Ideology in Musicological Discourse'. Royal Musical Association Study Day, 'Improvisation in Musical Performance', London, October 2004. The paper argued that the concept of improvisation is an idea actually generated by social contexts which place a high value on the notated musical composition.

music outside the West is produced without notation and is at the same time highly prepared, though not in Western ways, and should therefore not be termed improvised. Musicological vocabulary here implies that non-European races, where having no written scores, are thereby unprepared in respect of their musical practices. Their political or emancipatory aspirations, it is hinted, might not meet the criteria for finished performance either. Laudan Nooshin has suggested a parallel between the nineteenth-century European devaluation of improvisation in favour of the work, and the simultaneous colonial expansion that devalued the cultures colonized.[39]

Third: because our idea of 'improvisation' was culturally constructed as the antithesis of the notated work, the idea that the notated work can itself embody varying degrees of preparation was quietly sidelined from Western consciousness. Written musical composition can be a more or less prepared process. Schubert, whose compositional processes flowed freely, was much more unprepared as a composer than Beethoven, who had to struggle with his sketchbooks. Again, if a composer embarks on composing a structurally free composition such as a fantasia, she is being more unprepared than if she intends to produce a predetermined form such as a sonata first movement. Despite these degrees of preparation found in the compositional process, we still tend to overlook their manifold interest, because the whole idea of unpreparedness was ushered away from the compositional sphere. The idea of 'improvisation' was socially constructed by nineteenth-century culture to identify the binary 'other' of the written work. Notions of improvisation or unpreparedness therefore had to be held aloof from any connection with the work itself, and could not be held to apply in any degree to issues surrounding the work's production. Any idea of 'compositional improvisatoriness' became an oxymoron, whereas evidence from how some composers actually compose suggests that it is really a perfectly coherent notion. This nineteenth-century constraint on the use of the word 'improvisation' still obstructs our insight into the relationship of preparation to the composed work. '*How* was this written?' is an interesting question not often asked of a musical piece, because it raises issues of levels of preparedness in composition, and so obscures the perceived separation, jealously fostered by the nineteenth century, between composition and improvisation.

Fourth: the allegedly 'unprepared' medium 'improvisation' is one of the most ideologically enlisted types of music-making there is in the West, often used as a metaphor or cipher for social change, or a subversive practice for those who collude in seeking such change. It symbolizes and facilitates the possibility of new relations among people. Perhaps the best-known example of this is the African-American improvisatory culture of sung spirituals and jazz, which functioned as an aspirational rebellion against slavery and suggested a new social order founded on freedom. The linkage of improvisation and social change is also why composers such as Cornelius Cardew in the 1960s linked improvisation to radical political agendas. Cardew's so-called 'improvisation rites' were explicitly motivated toward social goals. This means his music was directly prepared *for* something. In this anticipatory sense of preparation *for*, it can hardly be called 'unprepared'.

Yet, we always employ the word 'improvisation' exclusively in relation to the kind of things the music is prepared *from* and never in relation to the purposes it is prepared *for*. We mean by 'improvisation' not simply 'unprepared' but

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[39]   Nooshin, 'Composition/Improvisation Debate'.

merely 'coming *from*' lack of preparation. The unpreparedness of improvisation is therefore assessed only in relation to its sources, not its goals. Suppose for a moment that the word 'improvisation' did include the sense of 'unprepared *for* anything', Cardew could not have used it to refer to his politically motivated 'improvisation rites', nor could we.

This characteristic of the word 'improvisation' to treat the sphere of purpose as falling outside its reference has to do with the fact that its meaning was consolidated in opposition to the Kantian musical work. The latter had no aim or purpose: it is the purposeless and autonomous artwork. In the Kantian model, the work is obviously prepared *from* something, but there is no notion of 'purpose *for*' attaching to it. The reason why our use of the word 'improvisation' still does not accommodate any sense of 'unprepared *for*' is that the notion of preparation *for* did not exist to be opposed in the Kantian model of the artwork. To say the same thing in another way: because the word 'improvisation' was consolidated in the nineteenth century to mark difference from the work, no sense of 'unprepared *for*' ever entered the sense of the word 'improvisation', because a musical improvisation's being unprepared *for* anything did not mark a point of difference from the musical artwork, which was not prepared *for* anything either.

This nineteenth-century influence on the word 'improvisation' continues to bias our use of the word today, so that it functions using only half its etymological range. Whereas the word's form suggests that it should mean both 'unprepared *from*' and 'unprepared *for*', the weight of nineteenth-century forces continues to prevent the release of half its potential meaning and it continues to mean only unprepared *from*. This cultural limitation surrounding the use of the musical word 'improvisation' is all the more striking, when we remember that we use the English word 'unprepared' all the time, in relation to people, to mean 'unprepared *for*'. If I say 'he is unprepared', I do not mean that he came into existence without ancestors, but that he is not ready to do something: I mean he is 'unprepared *for*' not 'unprepared *from*'. (This usage has parallels in other European languages.) Yet the musical term 'improvisation' remains uninfluenced by this wider connotation of purpose and remains referentially confined to sources rather than goals.

So the word 'improvisation' misleads, and the nineteenth century remains tightly coiled up inside it. But what term should be used instead? A valuable new term, following Jeff Pressing, is 'real-time composition'.[40] (The temporal sense conveyed here always resonated in the lesser word 'extemporization'.) This term, in identifying the special temporal associations of what it seeks to designate, perhaps represents the most satisfactory contemporary corrective for the word 'improvisation'. No longer characterizing improvisation lexically in terms of non-preparation, it shines upon improvisation the light generated by the new sensitivity to the temporal, sensitivity already discussed above as having started to infuse other areas of musical aesthetics and theology.

Pressing's term 'real-time composition' is intended to suggest that, in improvisation, imaginative musical invention and its consequence in musical sound both arise within one section of clock time (as opposed to a prior composition time and then a subsequent performance time). However, despite its

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[40]   Jeff Pressing, 'Improvisation: Methods and Models', in *Generative Processes in Music: The Psychology of Performance, Improvisation, and Composition*, ed. John A. Sloboda (Oxford: Clarendon, 1988): 142.

undoubted merits, deriving from its temporal frame of reference, the term 'real-time composition' is not a permanent solution to the problem of classification. In addition to the fact that the whole argument of the present paper implies the historical relativity and therefore impermanence of any musical terminology, certain other objections to the usefulness of the term 'real-time composition' are already discernible.

In the first place, in using 'real-time composition' for music imaginatively prepared and sonically realized in the same stretch of clock time, the implication is that the time taken by other forms of musical preparation is unreal. Whenever, therefore, there is an act of composing a score, followed by a performance of that score, it is implied by Pressing's 'real time' terminology that the earlier act of writing the music down did not take place in time that is 'real'. However, the time taken by the initial composition process in conventional composing is just as 'real' as the time taken to perform what is composed. The simple fact of compositional time's being differentiated from subsequent performance time does not make it less real, but only different time.

There is a further difficulty with the term 'real-time composition', as I have written elsewhere:

> [T]he strict sense of 'real-time composition' is that of an act of composing in standard notation or other symbolism which takes place at the same speed as the performance of the work composed. For example, if a composer writes a line of music in minims where each minim is to be played at five second intervals (minim equals twelve) and also writes down each minim on his or her manuscript paper at five second intervals, this could be deemed real-time composition. If this compositional methodology ever came to be prevalent enough to need a descriptive term, the obvious term would be 'real-time composition'. It would then appear inappropriate if the latter term were already in use for improvisation, to which it is less applicable.[41]

Further, there is a particular model of time-consciousness inhabiting the compound adjective 'real-time', which assumes the priority of a single model of 'real time' which is essentially 'objective', or 'scientific' 'clock' time. Yet humans also have certain subjective perceptions of time, as when time drags in boredom, or goes quickly in enthusiasm, or when time is more radically transformed as in hallucinations or dreams. Such subjective time possesses a significance for our lives, our emotions and our engagement with the world, which it would not possess if it were simply 'unreal' for us. Yet subjective time consciousness is often quite unlike objective clock time. Pressing's adjective 'real-time' marginalizes subjective experiences of time-consciousness in which there are as many 'real times' as there are people, and where 'real time' is no longer a univocal concept.

This point can be taken further. Most problematically for Pressing's terminology, improvisational musical practices in many human cultures do indeed often have the evocation of just this subjective type of time in view. Thus, in certain non-Western cultures, 'improvisatory' or 'real-time' music is linked to attempts to achieve trance states in which objective clock time is no longer perceived. An example of this is found in music produced to engender shamanic

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[41]   Andrew Cyprian Love, *Musical Improvisation, Heidegger, and the Liturgy: A Journey to the Heart of Hope* (Lampeter: Edwin Mellen, 2003): 69–70.

ecstasy. Shamanic music is 'largely improvised'[42] and is also produced in order to 'abolish time and re-establish the primordial condition of which the myths tell'.[43] Here improvised music is used for achieving a state of time-consciousness specifically lifted *out* of what Pressing would understand by 'real time'. Pressing himself concurs that musical improvisation has deep religious roots in humanity and is a 'vehicle for consciousness expansion',[44] yet he does not notice that this claim is in tension with his association of improvisation with an objective 'real time'.

Such terminology based on 'real time' emerges, finally, as relatively helpful compared with 'improvisation', but ultimately remains a blunt instrument for reconceptualizing it. All this verbal unsatisfactoriness surrounding the idea of 'real-time' music suggests that our ways of referring to this kind of music might need to be constantly reviewed in relation to human understandings, which never stand still, of both reality and time. Improvised or real-time music thus neither requires nor implies the permanent usefulness of any words we may use to refer to it. Because seeing is always 'seeing as', constant reconceptualization belongs permanently to this particular musical phenomenon.

Despite its conceptual deficits, a good deal is owed to 'real-time' vocabulary. It is this temporally based critique and vocabulary surrounding improvisation, however faltering that vocabulary has proved, which has revived the neglected study of improvisation. This entails that renewed interest in improvisation exemplifies particularly well in the present context the general return to temporal values in musical aesthetics.

Retrieving Historicity in Theology and Musical Aesthetics

The importance of historicity and temporality have been advocated throughout, as crucial dimensions in and through which both music and Christian revelation are to be understood.[45] In both domains, theological and musical, beside dominant models of product there are crucial processes that have not received the attention due to them. Jean-Jacques Nattiez writes that 'the musical work is not merely what we used to call the "text" … The *essence* of a musical work is at once its genesis, its organization, and the way it is perceived.'[46] The idea of the musical text as a resting place set within a process, even though it continues to raise hard questions, nevertheless advances a more cogent understanding of music than any insulated and ahistorical autonomous work-concept arising from the Kantian tradition.

A similar insight applies to scriptural and Church teachings. They are resting places for Christian understanding, prepared in culture and re-received and re-

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[42]   Tim Hodgkinson, 'Siberian Shamanism and Improvised Music', *Contemporary Music Review* 14, parts 1–2 (1996): 59–66; 60.

[43]   Mircea Eliade, *Shamanism: Archaic Techniques of Ecstasy* (London: Routledge and Kegan Paul, 1964): 171.

[44]   Pressing, 'Improvisation', 142.

[45]   Heidegger's work undoubtedly underlies this paradigm shift to temporal process in aesthetics and theology. At least two thinkers mentioned above reflect his influence. Ferrara uses Heidegger explicitly in *Philosophy and the Analysis of Music*. Kasper adopts a Heideggerian framework where historicity is a basic structure of human existence, the all-embracing horizon out of which theology is pursued.

[46]   Jean-Jacques Nattiez, *Music and Discourse: Toward a Semiology of Music* (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 1990): ix.

interpreted in every generation. Like music, Christian revelation is both process and textual product, but it is not *static* textual product. Words never finalize divine revelation, any more than the musical text objectifies the musical phenomenon. The language of revelation can and must totalize meaning *for* the purposes of the moment, but it cannot bring a plenary expression of meaning *into* that moment. The meaning of God's revelation is by nature excessive, and cannot be linked to one set of verbal responses, but is developed over history.

There will always be both process and product, in music, and in the way in which God reveals truth to the Church. Products, resting places, will always arise in the form of doctrinal definitions in Church teaching or in some conception of the finished work of music. But they are just that: resting places. They are not points outside unfolding process, and they should not be understood timelessly according to Platonic models. Neither doctrinal statements nor musical works are ideal, Platonized entities. They are cultural and historical artefacts similarly dependent on re-reception or reperformance in a succession of ongoing contexts. In the case of Christian teaching, the re-reception is the interpretative work of the Church that brings the letter of the text to life in new contexts through responsible hermeneutics. In the case of music, there is reperformance through the interpretation of the score anew.

Certain new musical works, and certain newly arising revealed Christian teachings, tend to become paradigmatic, and set the future direction of the processes that generated them. Thus Beethoven's Ninth Symphony profoundly affected the culture that produced it, and likewise the Nicene Creed. This of course makes the relationship of process and product circular. Process is not free-standing, and remains process only because it is faithful to some principle that is not itself embedded in the process. It is also only revealed as process insofar as it is productive of a visible product or products. Without any products as its reference point, there would be no yardstick for identifying developing life in any process, and so there would not really be grounds for thinking it process at all, rather than simply non-directive change. Another question is: why do products arise at this or that moment in a process and not some other moment? To address this question, it is notable that no process exists in isolation, but every process interacts with other processes. We might imagine numerous waves in motion on a computer screen. Each wave symbolizes a separate process. The waves also intersect from time to time, and this may be taken to symbolize the way in which products essentially arise at the intersection of processes. Thus Beethoven's *Eroica* Symphony, responsive to the political achievements of Napoleon, emerges at the intersection of Beethoven's life process and certain events in the revolutionary processes of Europe. The Council of Nicaea emerges as a product of the intersection of the historical process of the developing Church and Constantine's personal life process and conversion.

The foregoing circular analysis of the subtleties of process and product contains intriguing explorations to 'think *with*' if not necessarily to agree with wholly. What is certain, however, is that – through an aggrandizement of the elements of the static, essential, atemporal and Platonic – product has been granted undue prominence over process, both in Christian theology and the recent Western aesthetics of the musical event. Both aesthetics and theology need to reposition themselves within a more soft-edged and embedded theory of product and a more energetic conception of process. The shared rediscovery of processual forms of thinking is therefore a major arena for the ongoing conversation between musicology and theology. It is an invitation to ask what

the established friendship between music and theology starts to look like, when we try to draw out the links between musical and Christian phenomena at the level of process.

For example, do the processual perspectives advanced above suggest that an even more fruitful and focused conversation might take place between *improvised* music and theology? Jeremy Begbie in *Theology, Music and Time* (2000) examines, among other themes, the improvisation of Christian community as described by St Paul. He does this by establishing a metaphorical connection between musical improvising and community. 'We receive music from others, improvise upon it, pass it back and on to others, and all this in such a way that we are drawn in, and they in turn become new improvisers.'[47]

I have elsewhere attempted to link musical process with Christian process by seeking to show how real-time (improvised) music may function as a primordial symbolic expression of hope for the Kingdom of God, especially in the liturgy. Liturgy is *theologia prima*, primary theology, the founding moment of all Christian theology, 'not merely one *locus theologicus* among many but … the very condition of doing theology, of understanding the Word of God'.[48] The primary *topos* of the intersection of music and theology is therefore the liturgy, which makes liturgy a fitting issue with which to conclude this paper. Real-time music, when used in the liturgy, powerfully symbolizes Christian hoping, comfort and the expectation of good. Moreover, in 'singing in tongues', it even rises to the status of a charismatic gift of the Holy Spirit. It is possible to construct a theology of real-time music, I have suggested, in which it is symbolically linked with the eschatological process of hope on which Christianity leads us.[49]

If music is hopeful in liturgy, this is not because it is invested with its hopefulness by the liturgy, but because music already tends to be hopeful. This natural hopefulness of music finds support in musicological writing, which has already shed considerable light on the relationship between music and the generation of human hope. Thus Ernst Bloch speaks of music's 'power of nostalgia, a nostalgia not for an old country we have left behind but for a virgin one, not for a past but for a future.'[50] Bloch deals with the linkage of music and hope in his classic work *The Principle of Hope* (1959). More concretely, African-American musical traditions constitute one particularly rich resource for studying the linkage of real-time musical activity and hope. These traditions, with their deep roots in the oppression of slavery, and expressing in consequence an intense hope for a better future, make extensive use of real-time musical idioms, as in blues. Here, as William Barlow comments, 'to improvise … was an individual affirmation of freedom'.[51] The present writer has also examined elsewhere the connection between hope and real-time music as found in the widespread shamanic music of humanity, and also in certain twentieth-century Western composers.[52]

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[47]   Jeremy Begbie, *Theology, Music and Time* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2000): 263.

[48]   Aidan Kavanagh, *On Liturgical Theology: The Hale Memorial Lectures of Seabury-Western Theological Seminary, 1981* (Collegeville, MN: The Liturgical Press, 1992): 89.

[49]   See Love, *Musical Improvisation*, 215–303.

[50]   Ernst Bloch, 'The Philosophy of Music', in *Essays on the Philosophy of Music* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1985): 132.

[51]   William Barlow, *'Looking Up at Down': The Emergence of Blues Culture* (Philadelphia, PA: Temple University Press, 1989): 327.

[52]   See Andrew Love, 'Improvising Their Future: Shamanic Hope in Ives, Schoenberg, Cage, Cardew, Rzewski and Messiaen', *Tempo: A Quarterly Review of Modern Music* 60/237

I have, additionally, argued elsewhere that real-time music in liturgy is more than just a way of symbolizing the hopeful Christian future, but becomes also a way of constructing the Christian future.[53] The association between sound and the construction of the future is already made in some current chaos theories from physics, where apparently random sound causes the future to arise at the level of the cosmos itself.[54] Using this physics as a starting point, human real-time music can be seen as a human construction of futurity. By means of real-time music, humans construct their future in an analogous way to the construction of futurity by the sounds of the cosmos.[55] Real-time music in the liturgy is therefore explained as a construction of the eschatological future of the Christian community, the music functioning here as an existential backdrop to more familiar motifs such as Sacraments and the revealed Word. Real-time music here is essentially theurgic, acting creatively with God, and contributing to the realization of God's promised future.[56]

No less than music's liturgical link with hope, discussed above, this liturgical link between real-time music and the construction of time needs to be understood in relation to the wider musicological enterprise. The idea that music exercises a central role in our apprehension of time has been developed extensively within musicology and the psychology of music. Human time is seen as closely linked to sound. For Roger Sessions:

> [O]f all the five senses, the sense of hearing is the only one inexorably associated with our sense of time. The gestures which music embodies are … movement … which gives time its meaning and its significance for us. If this is true, then sound is its predestined vehicle … By its very nature it embodies for us movement in time.[57]

A still more forceful claim is heard in Victor Zuckerkandl, who asserts that it is impossible to separate

> a thing 'time' from the forces that produce rhythm; time [is] nothing but the activity of these forces … In so far as we accept the testimony of music as basic, the existence of time is the same as its activity. We observe an oscillation, an accumulation – and this oscillation, this accumulation, *is* time.[58]

'Actually we have *not* two data, first the metric wave, or the forces active in the wave, and then a neutral medium "time" or "duration" *in* which the forces work, *in* which the wave pulses; on the contrary, the pulsing of the wave is itself already time, is itself already duration.'[59] Moreover, '[i]t is conceivable … that tone, in and for itself, quite apart from rhythm, as a result of its basic independence from any relation to the world of objects, clears our sight for the perception of time as

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(Jul. 2006): 24–32.

    [53]   See Love, *Musical Improvisation*, 270–7.

    [54]   See Marcus Chown, 'Random Reality', *New Scientist* 2227 (26 Feb. 2000): 24–8.

    [55]   See Love, *Musical Improvisation*, 277–9.

    [56]   See ibid.: 280–95.

    [57]   Roger Sessions, *The Musical Experience of Composer, Performer, Listener* (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 1974): 19–20.

    [58]   Victor Zuckerkandl, *Sound and Symbol: Music and the External World* (New York: Pantheon, 1956): 207.

    [59]   Ibid.: 209–10.

such, time as event.'[60] We hear in these two writers similar claims that musical imagination in humans is the very vehicle through which humans make their time arise as a distinctively human experience. Further to this, it does not seem unreasonable to suggest that the play of real-time music-making is a place in which such imagination is very potently engaged.

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[60]   Ibid.: 220.