Hans Fidom

Music as Installation Art

Organ Musicology, New Musicology and Situationality
Music as Installation Art
Organ Musicology, New Musicology and Situationality

Last year, the artist John Perrault introduced the so-called Museum of Modern Art (MOMA) Syndrome on his weblog ‘Artopia’. He described it as “that sinking feeling of disappointment when you see a work of art, which you previously knew only from reproductions, in real life”. Perrault went on to pose the question to the Facebook followers of Artopia whether they were familiar with the syndrome. One of the group’s members, Manon Cleary, answered with an anecdote: ‘Escorting a group of undergraduate students through the Phillips Collection in DC, I was very surprised when one of my brightest students asked, “are these real paintings?”’

A good question indeed. Have we seen a work of art if we only know it from a reproduction? Is there really an ‘original’ at all? Trying to answer such questions means, to put it philosophically, trying to establish the presence of the work of art. When considering both the use and necessity of Organ Musicology, this appears to be a central issue. The discussion will of course focus on ‘establishing the presence’ of music, ‘Orgelkunde’ being a musicological discipline.

Situationality
Theodor Adorno is one of two philosophers whom I would like to cite by means of introduction. In his 1949 publication Philosophie der neuen Musik, Adorno quotes the warning of his friend Eduard Steuermann that we are in danger of forgetting ‘the experience of music’. This is equally true for the ‘lay’ listener who, as Adorno puts it, ‘only desires music which babbles on as an incidental accompaniment to his work’, as for the expert, whose knowledge is in danger of becoming seasoned pedantry. Adorno: “While he can manipulate every piece of counterpoint, he has long since lost sight of that counterpoint’s purpose”. Adorno’s remedy is that we as listeners focus on the ‘individual work of art’ accepting the fact that, in doing so, our knowledge of general music theory or music history fails to serve us adequately. He realises that his proposition departs drastically from the normal tools used to understand ‘die Sache [i.e. ‘the matter’], wie sie an und für sich selbst ist’, for it implies much more than analysis, commentary and criticism. Nevertheless, Adorno dismisses the idea that ‘general, tacitly accepted’ conditions can be placed on the compositional process.

While Adorno looks for the presence of a piece of music in the ‘object’, to use the word he himself chose, Peter Sloterdijk chooses another point of departure, via a variation of Hannah Arendt’s question ‘Where are we, when we think?’ Sloterdijk asks: ‘Where
are we, when we hear music?" His idea is that we hear music before we are even born: the heartbeat and the voice of our mothers. As a foetus we anticipate life as a ‘sound world’, but once we are born we experience it as a ‘crash world’. This has the result of our ear’s longing to return to the womb. Music thus establishes a link between two aspirations: to move towards the world and to escape it. Sloterdijk links this idea with two classes of music, one which turns its back on the world and one which embraces it. An answer to the question of where we are when we hear music is only possible, says Sloterdijk, ‘when music as a whole might be traced back to an unmistakeable basic experience’. He then formulates a reply to the question of the presence of music: ‘Musik ist nur im hörenden Subjekt’ (‘Music exists only in the one who listens’). This does not mean to say that music itself could be of limited importance, for the reverse is also true: ‘Das hörende Subjekt ist nur in der Musik.’

Adorno and Sloterdijk are, of course, only two of many philosophers who are relevant to our thoughts about music. To say that their contributions don’t add up to a single musical philosophy, even regarding establishing the presence of music, would be the understatement of the century. In fact, all we seem to be able to say for certain is that works of art are ‘situational’, to use the rather inelegant but clear neologism introduced by management experts Paul Hersey and Ken Blanchard in 1969. When a work of art is present, this postulates a situation in which the work may be named present. To elaborate on Adorno, we know that the music in such a situation plays an important role and, to elaborate on Sloterdijk, we know that the listener also plays an essential part.

Reality seems to confirm the idea that works of art are situational. Strictly speaking, art works like this: someone invites somebody else by saying ‘listen to this’. Or ‘look at this’. You listen, you look. Your senses are open, in the case of music not just your ears, in the case of visual art not just your eyes. Inevitably, art establishes itself differently on each occasion: we cannot step in the same river twice, to cite Heraclites.

Reality also allows us to see that, as soon as the experiencing of music becomes a group activity, the various power relationships at play become strongly influenced by other aspects. These include social aspects, especially evident in the conversation which follows the music, in the foyer, in the newspaper or on the radio. The main theme of this conversation is judgement. What have we experienced, what did we think of it, how do our opinions relate to each other’s? Following judgement one can expect correction. This third phase is the domain of a special sort of listener: the musician. Correction is not only to be expected in the context of the work’s next performance but also in its recordings. This is especially true with today’s advances in technology; its seductive powers prove impossible to resist. Just as magazines like to publish ‘photoshopped’ pictures, and just as Facebook consists of carefully constructed and carefully guarded profiles, so recorded music presents a corrected world. The
consequence is a variant of the Droste effect: think of the story of the world famous organist crushed by nerves before his concerts because he believes that his concerts must sound as perfect and accurate as his CDs and, therefore, his CDs just as perfect and accurate as his concerts. A truly vicious circle.

Experience, judge, correct. Thereafter study again in order to facilitate the next experience. Our musical life seems to be driven by a four-stroke engine. This apparatus is provided by fuel from various sources. The first source is that the MOMA syndrome cannot be applied to music. While, in the context of visual art, we can reach out and, in theory, physically grasp the ‘thing’, whether a painting or a sculpture, with music this is impossible.

We have, therefore, no option but to accept, time after time, that we have not really encountered the ‘true’ work of art at all, even if we thought we had. This reminds of a lecture given by conductor Sergiu Celibidache in Munich in 1985. Celibidache stated that only one Fifth Symphony of Beethoven truly exists and that as a conductor one is obliged to go in search of it via trial and error: not like that, not like that and also not like that. A frustrating position to take, for even Celibidache would not have been able to repeat his ideal performance of Beethoven ‘5’, had he succeeded in discovering it, and was thus doomed to exclaim ‘not like that!’ for the rest of his days.

A second source of fuel for the endlessly active four-stroke motor of our musical culture is the importance placed on ‘informed performance’ by significant groups of professional musicians; the idea that one can achieve a more or less ideal performance on the basis of knowledge of the composer, score, instrument, style, attitude etc. Much has been published about this concept for which Stan Godlovitch coined the term the ‘subordination view’. According to him, musicians who subscribe to this perspective, over-estimate the status of ‘fixed works’ and under-estimate the degree of ‘underdetermined’ (as Godlovitch articulates it) elements in scores. Peter Kivy’s critical texts about authenticity are, in this context, equally relevant. Kivy differentiates between four notions of authenticity: ‘faithfulness to the composer’s performing intentions; faithfulness to the performance practice of the composer’s lifetime; faithfulness to the sound of a performance during the composer’s lifetime; and faithfulness to the performer’s own self.’ The first three varieties of authenticity are described by Kivy as examples of ‘historic authenticity’. Especially interesting for us, however, is the fourth type of authenticity which, nevertheless, can be nuanced and related to the first three types by, for example, recognising that the authenticity of the musician is related to the authenticity of his instrument.

Godlovitch and Kivy were not the first to question the tendency, especially common in the early music sector, to set historic knowledge as a condition for convincing music-making. John Cage stated as early as 1955 that ‘no knowing action is commensurate, since the character of the knowledge acted upon prohibits all but some eventualities.’ And: ‘An experimental action [by which Cage means music-making] does not move in terms of approximations and errors as “informed” action, by its nature,
must, for no mental images of what would happen were set up beforehand”.

Characteristic for this ‘informed’ action is a reliance on what I would like to call ‘circumstantial evidence’, as the ‘evidence’ refers in fact mainly to knowledge ‘round’ the music rather than knowledge of what is presented on the stage in a concrete situation. The risk of Adorno’s ‘seasoned pedantry’ is here great, for this is a type of knowledge which can stop attentive and open listening.

A third, closely related, source of fuel is that constant judgement and correction may lead to ‘closed morals’, as Henri Bergson expressed it, a system geared to the preservation of social traditions. Peer-group pressure is an important influence on the ‘game of correction’ played by both musicians and listeners whether in the context of Celibidache’s striving for the ‘correct’ interpretation or the discussions surrounding ‘informed performance practices’.

Bearing the ideas of Adorno and Sloterdijk in mind and augmenting them with our brief contact with the ideas of Celibidache, Cage and Bergson, it would seem highly advisable to re-double our efforts “to put the music back into musicology”, as Nicholas Cook put it in 1999. In other words, and to recycle our metaphor: perhaps we could try to let our musical four-stroke motor run a little smoother. The ‘judgement’ stage in particular could benefit from being ‘lubricated’ and, logically, the correction stage as well.

New Musicology

The background to Cook’s plea was the emergence of ‘New Musicology’ since the 1980s. Within this movement, special attention was paid to musical experience, a tendency which gained a significant foothold. It is especially fortuitous to be able to illustrate the situation today by mentioning a number of present Dutch examples.

Sander van Maas’ inaugural speech at the University of Utrecht in 2009, for example, was entitled What is a Listener? It referred, among other things, to Elmer Schönberger’s concept of ‘Het Grote Luisteren’ (i.e. ‘Grand Listening’). Another example is the work of Henkjan Honing, whose inaugural speech at the University of Amsterdam in 2010 was entitled De ongeletterde luisteraar (literally translated: ‘The illiterate Listener’).

Vincent Meelberg, of the Radboud University in Nijmegen, states in his 2010 book Kernthema’s in het muziekonderzoek (‘Key themes in musical research’) that, as far as he is concerned, the ‘listening experience’ is the central theme in musical research.

Another project, in which music’s situationality is problematised as a whole (i.e. addressing many more factors than just the listener’s role therein) is the research into ‘The Field of Musical Improvisation’, a concept of Marcel Cobussen, teacher and researcher at the ‘Academie der Kunsten van de Universiteit Leiden’ and at ‘docARTES’, a doctoral programme in the arts.

That these forms of musicology require a much broader and, of course, interdisciplinary domain than ‘traditional musicology’ is, understandably, also discernible in the international literature. In his 2010 book Entangled, Chris Salter draws
interesting parallels between performance practice and philosophical, scientific and sociological research. As far as this last form of research is concerned, Salter cites Lucy Suchman, who, in 1987, coined the phrase ‘situated action’. She proposed that the coherence of a situated action is tied in essential ways not to individual predispositions or conventional rules but to local interactions contingent on the actor’s particular circumstances.

Also of interest in this context is the phenomenology of Bruce Ellis Benson who assigns improvisation a central function in Western music. In his book, *The Improvisation of Musical Dialogue*, published in 2003, Benson tries to find an alternative to the idea which, according to him, is broadly accepted within classical music and its associated theory, of ‘Werktreue’ (faithfulness to the original) and the related concept of the composer as the ultimate creator. Benson refers to Stan Godlovitch and concurs with Gadamer, who sees music as a dialogue with a ‘logical structure of openness’. He comes to the conclusion that improvisation is an element of all forms of music-making: according to Benson, no-one can claim to be the ‘owner’ of the music, neither the composer, nor the musician, nor the listener. They are all partners in an extraordinary game – the making of music – which he describes as an improvisatory process. Improvisation can be seen in this context as the DNA which binds the various actors in a musical situation together and lends the situation its unique character.

**Installation Art**

Dear Listeners: Organ Musicology is, more than any other musicological discipline, driven by the situationality of music-making. If there is one form of music which is explicitly situational, certainly within our Western culture, then it is organ music. Organ Musicology offers us, therefore, a promising platform for contributions towards research into music’s situationality.

That’s the second part of my lecture today. I would like to begin by quoting philosopher Bert van der Schoot, who, during one of his visits to the Orgelpark here in Amsterdam summed it up succinctly by noting that organ music is, in fact, installation art: art, which is designed for a specific room and which, after the exhibition is finished, can never exist again in the same way.

The point here is that every organ is different from every other organ. This obliges the organist to constantly revise and adapt the music to the specific situation. Should an organist find a successful way of performing a Preludium by Bach on the famous organ in Haarlem and should he assume that an identical approach, even if it were possible, should work on the beautiful organ in Kampen, he would certainly be sorely disappointed: the Preludium will always sound differently in Kampen. This is true even though the instruments in question were built within five years of each other and both date from Bach’s lifetime. I do not mean to infer here that pianists or violinists are not capable of recognising a specific instrument from a collection of thousands of others, or even not respecting the individuality of an instrument, but simply that the
blueprints of the violin or piano are more uniform than that of the organ. A composer of piano music can, therefore, prescribe more precise instructions for what the pianist must do than a composer for the organ. Should the latter compose for a specific instrument, he either restricts the performer to the organ he himself has in mind or must accept the unavoidable loss of artistic control as soon as the score finds itself on the music desk of another organ.

It is important to consider that organists during the mid 19th century, uniquely among musicians, did not stop practicing the art of making music without a score. This was undoubtedly the result of the necessity of filling silent moments of unpredictable duration during the liturgy with music. Organists also realised, however, that organs sounded most convincing when their best features were highlighted and their weaknesses avoided. Improvisation was, of course, the most effective way to achieve this.

It is interesting to consider the way in which the position of the musician appears to be situated rather close to the centre of the listener's attention from this perspective on musical situationality.

To illustrate this, I would like to present a sketch of the organist playing Bach in Haarlem. Bach's intentions in this sketch are seen as a spotlight and his score as a round shape; a shape which focuses the beam of the spotlight in such a way that a circle of light appears on the flat surface behind. This circle represents all possible performances of the score. The organist chooses his position in this domain through knowledge of the composer on the one hand, his ideas, the style of his time etc and, on the other, knowledge of the instrument on which he shall perform the music. In this manner the organist finds a route through the beam of light between the ideas of the composer and the score on the one side and, by extension, between the score and the performance domain on the other. The link which then becomes apparent between the intention of the composer and the performance itself invalidates the Platonic idea of a ‘correct’ performance, whether inspired by Celibidache, informed performance practice and/or peer group pressure: many performances are possible, and this is precisely what we encounter in reality.

An enlarged version of this model demonstrates that recordings can function as scores. Listening to Bach in Haarlem on your iPod in the train can render the music, to give just one example, akin to a sort of film score. As soon as the organist preserves his chosen position in the performance domain through the medium of a recording, this position will re-appear later on, namely when the recording is listened to. At that moment, the position on the performance domain chosen by the organist and corrected by the recording engineer functions as a new intention, comparable with the intention of the composer when he composed the score. As a result, the recording now functions as ‘score 2.0’: the recording has become a shape which, in turn, restricts the boundaries of the domain in which the music now appears, since the recording now not only identifies the music as the music of Bach but also as a specific performance of
it. The responsibility of establishing a position in the performance domain has shifted once again: having already moved from the composer to the musician, the creation of ‘Performance Domain 2.0’ has put the listener in charge, for example through his choice of equipment and through all kinds of other peripheral circumstances. A Sloterdijk-like phrase seems appropriate here: we have discovered a powerful ‘immune system’ against the frustrations of the MOMA syndrome. The answer to the question ‘is this real?’ changes from a constant ‘no’, as we saw in the case of Celibidache, to a constant ‘yes’. As a consequence neither the intention of the composer, nor that of the musician, can be seen as the ‘ideal’ point of reference when judging or correcting. The ideal reference point has become the perception of the listener who has literally witnessed the musical situation.

Organ Musicology
To summarise: Nicholas Cook’s desire to ‘put music back in musicology’ is relevant both to music and musicology but simplifies the practice of neither. Organ musicology is exceptionally well geared to help, however. Just as the organ obliges organists constantly to reflect on how their music sounds in different environments, Organ Musicology also obliges musicologists to take each individual situation in which music is made as the starting point for their musicological research. Organ Musicology also has an inherently practical advantage: research into organ music is relatively simple because of the single instrument and musician involved.

It will be of no surprise to learn that research into listening will play an important role here at the VU University. In 1940, Adorno carried out comparable research at Princeton University. However, where Adorno saw a problem in the variety of contrasting reactions from a group of listeners to a particular musical situation, this could also be seen in the context of a ‘situation’; a factor which is recognised and considered a self-evident and even essential element of the experience. Adorno’s problem was the result of his focusing primarily on the object (the music). As a result, his position underestimated the importance of other aspects. Within the context of the Orgelpark Research Programme, launched in 2008 and now closely linked to the study of Organ Musicology here at the VU, the necessary preparations to facilitate research into listening have now been made. For example, within the Improvisation Project, the concept of Real Time Analysis has been investigated and, following considerable discussion, re-Christened as ‘Witnessing Music in Real Time’. During a number of intensive sessions conducted in co-operation with the ‘Forschungstelle Basel für Improvisation’ and the ‘Academie der Kunsten’ in Leiden, the parameters have been established for evaluating how music is experienced and perceived, at the moment of its performance, both by listener and musician. The intention is to develop research via a number of different routes: through discussions with the public at live concerts; through investigations of the discussions which take place ‘after the music’; through research into recordings. Yet another line of
investigation will involve discussions with organ voicers and advisors: when do they believe that the stationary sound is convincing and why? At this point, Organ Musicology will come into contact with Sonic Studies, a new discipline focusing on sound rather than on music.

Closely related to this form of Witnessing Music in Real Time is a second point of departure within the Improvisation Project, namely the problematising of the concept ‘improvisation’. When the musician does not use a score, neither do the (other) listeners, so no-one involved is bound to a score’s references to previous performances and recordings. In this context, improvisatory music-making means, in fact, ‘improvisatory listening’. This implies, among other things of course, that our use of the concept of improvisation in fact tends to colonise the musical heritage of our past. When Bach and Buxtehude played the organ, they normally did so without a score. The way in which they made music contrast, therefore, with those who improvise at the organ today. In this way, the history of organ music (just as the history of organbuilding) reflects the development of music and music-making in the West in general, as well as how the situationality of music functioned differently in other times. This line of enquiry is one of the reasons that the Orgelpark will next year install the reconstruction of the organ built for the Klaaskerk in Utrecht in 1479. The project is an initiative of the Dutch National Heritage Service (‘Rijksdienst voor het Cultureel Erfgoed’). Which historic musical situations are connected to this organ and what can it teach us about music-making on it today? The research into heritage and into ‘Improvisational Musicking’ will go hand in hand with, but will not by any means be limited to, research into listening.

In parallel with these research activities, a number of doctoral dissertations are already underway. Understanding music as a situational phenomenon and applying this to organ music means for them, among other things, affording considerable attention to combinations of organ and music which are not self-evidently ideal, such as Bach on the Couperin organ behind me so well played by University organist Henk Verhoeof a moment ago. One of the doctoral candidates, for example, is researching the remarkable organ music culture in the ‘Re-Reformed’ (orthodox Protestant) denominations in the early 20th century. What was music-making like in the time of Abraham Kuyper, how did it relate to its surrounding culture and what were the key musical situations? The study of scores and literature are important parts of this research, although less important than research into old recordings.

Epilogue

In a word: it seems quite useful to consider music as installation art, to apply this consideration within the context of research into organ music, and, by doing so, to articulate the situationality of music in general as an important theme within Musicology in general, whether new or not.
I would like to conclude by expressing my gratitude. Firstly to the University’s Board who realised immediately after the sudden death of my predecessor Ewald Kooiman in January 2009 that the Professorship of Organ Musicology should be continued. Thanks also to the Board of the Orgelpark Foundation and its Chairman Loek Dijkman, whose support ensured that the Professorship could indeed be re-established. In addition, I would like to thank Dean Douwe Yntema of the Faculty of Letters as well as Ginette Verstraete and Wouter Davidts of the Department of General Cultural Research for their considerable and stimulating interest. I look forward to working with them and with other colleagues, like, to name just one here, Timo de Rijk, Professor of Design Cultures, since organs are, in the end, not just musical instruments but highly designed custom-made products as well.

The greeting extended to this initiative by the musicological working groups at the Universities of Amsterdam and Utrecht was also heart-warming and I would especially like to thank Rokus de Groot, Henkjan Honing, Sander van Maas, Emile Wennekes, Karl Kügel, Jaap den Hertog and, of course, Bert van der Schoot. Co-operation has also been established between a pleasing number of universities at which organ music and related research is taken seriously. Valued colleagues in this respect include Joris Verdin of the Catholic University in Leuven, Jan Luth of the Rijksuniversiteit in Groningen, Peter Peters at the University of Maastricht, Vincent Meelberg of the Radboud University in Nijmegen, Albert Clement at the Roosevelt Academy in Middelburg and Marcel Cobussen of the Academie der Kunsten (Arts Academy) at the Rijksuniversiteit in Leiden. Marcel’s interest and friendship were of great significance during the thought processes about what the Chair of Organ Musicology can and should achieve. I would like to thank my colleagues at the Orgelpark as well: without artistic director Johan Luijmes and facility manager Sonja Duimel it wouldn’t be possible to make the connection between Organ Musicology at the VU University and the Orgelpark Research Program work.

At the same time I feel somewhat lonely. My own doctoral advisor Ewald Kooiman has passed away as has my co-advisor Hermann Busch, just six months ago. Hermann Busch was, in Germany, the ‘Autorität’ in the area of organ-related research. From 1987 onwards, when Ewald was promoted to the position of Professor of Organ Musicology, Busch was an outspoken supporter of Ewald’s activities here at the VU University. Finally I would like to pay special thanks to Mirjam Kooiman, her mother Truus and her brother Peter, who have entrusted me with their father’s doctoral robes. Thank you for this deeply touching gesture. It is for me an honour to be able to continue Ewald’s work.
John Perrault introduced ‘MoMA Syndrome’ on his weblog in a text published on 17 May, 2010 under the heading ‘The Moma Syndrome’. A quote: ‘There is also something I will call the MoMA Syndrome: some first-time visitors to MoMA, wherever they are from, swoon and faint because the art they see does not live up to the perfection of full-color reproductions and slide presentations they have already viewed. That Pollock or Picasso is too small. That Barnett Newman is too messy. The ceilings are too low, and there are far too many people crowding in front of each painting. Is that really how a Monet looks?’ This initial text can be found here: http://www.artsjournal.com/artopia/2010/05/yyes_klein_online_plus_the_mom.html. In the introduction to the discussion which followed, Perrault wrote the following under the heading ‘Fasten Your Seat Belts: The MoMA Syndrome’. The MoMA Syndrome is defined by that sinking feeling of disappointment when visitors see artworks previously known only through color reproductions or projections in a lecture hall. ‘And I called it the MoMA Syndrome because it sounds catchy and, after all, MoMA has the world’s biggest cache of modern-art masterpieces, which are, for better or worse, endlessly reproduced.’

The original text: ‘And finally excerpting a group of undergraduate students through the Phillips Collection in DC, I was surprised once when one of my brightest students asked, “are these real paintings?” She thought they were posters. Well John, what are real paintings? ’ The complete discussion can be read here: http://johnperraulttheartopian.blogspot.com/2010_08_01_archive.html. Manon Cleary is an artist who lives in Washington DC. See also (among others): http://thenegway.net/2008/03/artist-profile-manon-cleary.html.

Theodor W. Adorno, Philosophie der neuen Musik, Gesammelten Schriften XII, as it appeared in the ‘text- und seitendentifierische’ publication by Suhrkamp Verlag, Frankfurt, 1978. The book was published in 1949 and was Adorno’s first text after the war. It was written between 1940 and 1948 during the author’s stay in the United States. From here on I will refer to this text simply as ‘Adorno’.


Adorno, 17: ‘Seitdem der kompositorische Prozeß einzig an der eigenen Gestalt eines Werkes, nicht an stillschweigend akzeptierten, allgemeinen Forderungen sein Maß hat, läßt sich nicht mehr ein für allemal „lernen“, was gute oder schlechte Musik sei. Wer ureilten will, muß den unausweichlichen Fragen und Antagonismen des individuellen Gebildes ins Auge sehen, über die keine generelle Musikttheorie, keine Musikgeschichte ihn unterrichtet.’

Adorno, 33: ‘Gefordert ist vielmehr, die Kraft des allgemeinen Begriffs in die Selbstantfaltung des konkreten Gegenstandes zu transzendentalisieren und dessen gesellschaftlich-solidarischen Bemühungen aufzulösen.’ En: ‘Zugleich […] grenzt die Methode auch von den Tätigkeiten sich ab, welchen herkömmlicherweise die “Sache, wie sie an und für sich selbst ist”, reserviert wird. Das sind die deskriptive technische Analyse, der apologetische Kommentar und die Kritik.’ The expression ‘die Sache, wie sie an und für sich selbst ist’, is taken by Adorno from Hegel’s Phänomenologie des Geistes, in which Hegel writes (as quoted by Adorno) that ‘wir es nicht nötig haben, Maßstäbe mitzubringen und unsere Einfälle und Gedanken bei der Untersuchung zu applizieren; dadurch, daß wir diese Weglassen, erreichen wir es, die Sache, wie sie an und für sich selbst ist, zu betrachten.’


Sloterdijk divides the concept of Emile Cioran that ‘all das, was musikalisch ist, […] zur Reminiscenz [gehört]”, in two. ‘Erstens, vor der Individuation hören wir voraus – das heißt: das totale Gehör antizipiert die Welt als eine Geraschau- und Klangtotalität, die immer im Kommen ist; es lautsch ekstatisch vom Dunklen der Tonwelt entgegen, meist welwerts orientiert, in einen unentmutigbaren Voranzug in die Zukunft. Zweitens, nach der Ichbildung hören wir zurück – das Ohr will die Welt als Larmtotalität ungeschehen machen, es sehnt sich zurück in die archaische Euphonia des vorweltlichen Innen, es aktiviert die Erinnerung an eine euphorische Entzauberung, die uns ein Neuland her begleitet’ (56). ‘Musik ist nicht die Musik’ in Darmstadt, the Verbindung zweier Strengungen, die sich wie dialektisch aufeinander bezogene Gebärden gegenseitig erzeugen’ (57).

Sloterdijk introduces a ‘resonant Cogito’ via a critical reconstruction of the Cartesian doubt experiment. Sloterdijk concludes that hearing oneself precedes thinking oneself. In addition to the ‘logical Cogito’ there exists, therefore, a ‘resonant Cogito’. Regarding the question of what a musical space is, how one enters it and how one leaves again, Sloterdijk writes: ‘Die Antwort hierauf wäre nur möglich, wenn das Musikalishe in seinem gesamten Umfang auf eine unmissverständliche Grunderfahrung zurückgeführt werden könnte, die, wie ein Axiom oder ein sonores Cogito, das unerschütterliche Fundament musikalischer Gewissheit lieferte. Von einer solchen Grundlage jedoch ist nichts bekannt, so wenig wie von musikologischen Absichten des
Descartes' (64). Sloterdijk expands on the idea that Descartes' experiment is only successful because he had a blind spot or, rather, a deaf spot: 'Es ist ihm nicht gegenwärtig, dass er seiner selbst und seines Denkens nur darum gewiss sein kann, weil ein Sichhören seiner "Sichdenken" zuvorkommt' (67). 'Das sonore Cogito ist das genaue Gegenteil dessen, was Descartes von dem logischen Cogito verlangt; es ist weder ein Fundament – wohl oder nicht trägt – noch etwas Uberschütteltes, weil es nicht fixiert werden kann' (68). In conclusion: 'Musik ist nur im hörenden Subjekt. Dieser Satz freilich bleibt allein zusammen mit seiner Umkehrung richtig: Das hörende Subjekt ist nur in der Musik. Bei sich sein kann das Subjekt mithin nur, wenn ihm etwas gegeben ist, was sich in ihm horen lässt – ohne Klang kein Ohr, ohne Anderes kein Selbst' (69).

Paul Hersey and Ken Blanchard, in their book Management of Organizational Behavior – Utilizing Human Resources (New York: Harper & Row, 1964) it remains a popular book to this day. They expand on the idea that striving for effective leadership can be successful when one realises that every situation requires a different kind of leadership. Such leadership is, by extension, referred to as 'situational'.


John Cage, 'Experimental Music: Doctrine', The Score and LMA Magazine (London: 1955, also published in John Cage, Silence (Middletown, Connecticut: Wesleyan University Press, 1961), 13 ff.) Quote (15): 'In view, then, of a totality of possibilities, knowing action is commensurate, since the character of the knowledge acted upon prohibits all but some eventualities. From a realist position, such action, though cautious, helpful, and generally entered into, is unsuitable. An experimental action, generated by a mind as empty as it was before it became one, thus in accord with the possibility of no matter what, is, on the other hand, practical. It does not (or at least its terms of approximation, as "informed") action by its nature must, for no mental images of what would happen were set up beforehand; it sees things directly as they are: impermanently involved in an infinite play of interpenetrations.'

In Les deux sources de la morale et de la religion (Paris: Presses Universitaires de France, 1932), Bergson writes that there are two sources of morals: one is closed, created by the pressures of society, impersonal and geared to the preservation of social traditions; the other is open, personal, independent of society and creative.


Elmer Schönberger introduced his concept of 'Grand Listening' during the 2005 Huizinga lecture. The Dutch newspaper, 'NRC Handelsblad', published a shortened version of this lecture on 17 December, 2005. The full version can be read in Schönberger's book Het gebroken oor (Amsterdam: Meulenhoff, 2007), which also contains other articles by Schönberger, previously published in Vrij Nederland. The front cover of the book features, incidentally, an organ console.

Henkjan Honing, De ongeletterde lustraera (Amsterdam: Koninklijke Nederlandse Academie van Wetenschappen, 2010).

Vincent Meelberg, Kernsthema's in het muziekonderzoek (The Hague: Boom Lemma uitgevers, 2010), 110: 'In the context of the study of music in which the accent is placed on musical parameters, it is assumed that music such as this will be experienced by a listener. When approached like this the object “music” becomes both a sounding phenomenon and a convention. Moreover, the interaction between music and listener takes a central place. The key element becomes the listening experience and this is the phenomenon which stands at the heart of music research.'


Chris Salter, Entangled / Technology and the Transformation of Performance (Massachusetts: Massachusetts Institute of Technology, 2010). Salter opens his book with a reference to the hope that the introduction of technology can be an ongoing impulse for the arts: 'What these histories so fundamentally reveal is that the performing arts are really amalgamating light, space, sound, materials, machines, code, and a perceiving public into unique spatiotemporal events' (xxi-xxii).

Salter, xxxiv: 'Emerging from learning theory and anthropological studies of human-machine interaction, the term situated denotes actions, whether originating in human beings, machines, or materials, that occur in a concrete real-world context at a particular time and place versus anytime, anywhere simulation, such as what takes place in online environments. In what anthropologist Lucy Suchman almost twenty years ago argued situated action, situation suggests “simply actions taken in the context of particular, concrete circumstances” (quoted from Lucy Suchman, Plans and Situated Actions / The Problem of Human-Machine Communication (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1987, viii). Salter (xxxiv) once again quotes Suchman: ‘The coherence of a situated action is tied in essential ways not to individual predispositions or conventional rules but to local interactions contingent on the actor’s particular circumstances’ (Suchman 1987, 27-28).

Bruce Ellis Benson, The Improvisation of Musical Dialogue (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2003), 3-4 (Godlovitch), 15, 118 (Gadamer). Benson: ‘Gadamer claims that an ideal dialogue has what he calls “the logical structure of openness”, I think there are at least two aspects to this “openness”. First, the conversation often brings something into the open: it sheds new light on what is being discussed and allows us to think about it (or, in this case, hear in a new way. Second, the dialogue itself is open, since it (to quote Gadamer) is in a “state of indeterminacy”. In order for a genuine dialogue to take place, the outcome cannot be settled in advance’ (15).

Dr. A. van der Schoot works at the University of Amsterdam, Faculty of Humanities, Department of Philosophy, working group ‘Critical Cultural Theory’.

The word ‘imune’ appears regularly in various publications by Sloterdijk. A nice example can be found in Du mußt dein Leben ändern / Uber Anthropotechnik (Frankfurt: Suhrkamp Verlag, 2009), in which Sloterdijk defines the word ‘Anthropotechniken’: ‘Ich verstehe hierunter die mentalen und physischen Übungsanleitungen, mit denen die Menschen verschiedenster Kulturen versucht haben, ihren kosmischen und sozialen Immunstatus angesichts von vagen Lebensrisiken und akuten Todesschwestern zu optimieren’ (23).
28 Van Maas refers to Robert Hullot-Kentor, according to whose writings, Adorno’s project remained incomplete due to the lack of a theory of listening. This because Adorno fails to explain ‘what listening, in general, is’. Van Maas notes that Lydia Goehr’s explanation for this is ‘that Adorno did not find listening to be important’. ‘Adorno establishes, in other words, his priority as the object’ (Van Maas, 16). Van Maas quotes Lydia Goehr in ‘Dissonant Works and the Listening Public’, The Cambridge Companion to Adorno (Tom Huhn (ed.), Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2004), 239.

29 Research through discussions of ‘sub-live’ concerts will become possible at the Orgelpark as well, following the installation, this coming summer, of equipment which will allow one of the organs, via a digital memory system (MIDI), to ‘re-perform’ a concert precisely as it occurred

30 Henk Verhoef (red.), Het oude orgel van de Nicolaïkerk te Utrecht / Kroongetuigen van de Nederlandse muziekgeschiedenis (Zutphen: Walburg Pers, Stichting Nederlandse Orgelmonografieën, Stichting Peter Gerritsz orgel, Rijksdienst voor het Cultureel Erfgoed, 2009). The chapters entitled ‘Beschrijving van het orgel’ (204-247) by Wim Diepenhorst and ‘Het Gerritsz-orgel van de Nicolaïkerk te Utrecht’ (11-153) by Rogér van Dijk are especially important.

31 The so-called ‘Couperin organ’ was inaugurated on 25 May, 1973, a month after the official opening of the main building. The organ was a gift from the VU foundation. It is built according to the principals of French organbuilding in the 18th century. Baroque French organ music was one of the specialities of Ewald Kooiman (1938-2009, from 1987 until 2008 Professor of Organ Musicology and Organist at the VU) who designed and advised on the design and construction of the organ in co-operation with Frans Stam. The Couperin organ is named after one of the most important composers of the French baroque period, François Couperin (1668-1733). The VU chose to commission this type of instrument because it is so rare in the Netherlands. The organ was built by the French firm Koenig (pipework) and the Dutch firm Fontein & Gaal (technical elements, case). In 2005, the voicing of the organ was improved by Flentrop. The firm Kaat & Tijhuis (who took over the business from Fontein & Gaal) renovated the organ’s technical aspects.

32 The development of the idea to focus on the musical situations in musicology is paralleled by a development in the Dutch approach of organ restoration in the past decades. Whereas organ restorations had been reconstructions for a long time in the 20th century, they nowadays are preferred to be preservations. One of the reasons is that what was regarded ‘authentic’ before, turned out to be in fact something else, namely a reflection of the ideas of the experts involved. The result is that their ‘pedantry’ can no longer be referential; referential has to be the way the organ to be restored presents itself, and what the possibilities are to respect that situation (the word ‘situation’ is common among organ restoration experts). In its memorandum, published in 2007, the Dutch National Heritage Service mentions that restorations should be ‘sober and effective’; that preservation is preferred over restoration; and restoration over reconstruction.

33 Peter Kivy primarily discusses the three form of historic authenticity in his Authenticities (see note 14). The fourth type is referred to in his chapter entitled ‘The other authenticity’ ‘personal authenticity’. Kivy cites Thomas Carson Mark, ‘The Philosophy of Piano Playing / Reflections on the Concept of Performance’ (Philosophy and Phenomenological Research 41/1981); see Kivy 1995, 115-122. He criticises Mark’s basic premise that music is a discourse; his opinion is that such literary notions do not apply to non-literary art, for example as a result of repetition in music (Kivy 1995, 120-122). It would be interesting to compare the performance of music with the playing, as an actor, of a role in a theatre piece and the status of the performance of a ‘piece of music’ with that of a ‘theatre piece’. Unlike music, it is self-evident in theatre that the ‘score’ (the text) will be read differently and with a different personal contribution on the part of the actor(s) on each occasion.