Reworking Musical Strategies in the Digital Age

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A folio of musical compositions, written commentary and accompanying materials submitted in fulfillment of the requirements of the degree of Doctor of Philosophy.

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This submission comprises of a folio of creative work. It includes two DVDs, two CDs, musical scores, accompanying materials and a written commentary.

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Chapter 1

Preface

There are various reasons why I consider writing about music a difficult and overwhelming challenge. First, I acknowledge that music can be examined from many different angles and by many disciplines given that music carries within itself a complex content of meaning. Furthermore, I accept that music can be analyzed by the elaborate—social, cultural, political, economic and historical—conditions in which it is created and received. These conditions at the same time are revealed within music and therefore music can also be studied by looking at how its wider context may be traced through what happens within music itself. At the same time, I recognize that within the act of music-making lies in essence a collective experience in which intricate human relationships are formed. Therefore, music can be studied as a vital human act that is deep-rooted in our evolutionary past and which performs important functions that are closely related to human behavior and emotions. I am convinced that it is for this reason that music has drawn a lot of interest from the scientific community that has led to extensive research about music's impact on human experience: how it affects the human body and the brain.[1] Moreover, music is broadly considered as an autonomous discipline—music is studied independently as a subject that has developed its own music theory based on technical and aesthetic considerations (regarding how music is conceived, performed and received) from a musician's perspective. Therefore, music can be examined according to very different criteria: music can be studied for the (social, economic, evolutionary, etc.) functions it performs as well as for the way in which it follows certain considerations and models that are exclusive to music. Moreover, I believe that during the last century it has become apparent that music can also be studied for its potential to inspire new forms of thought in other areas of human endeavor based on the reconfiguration and

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[1]In the last fifteen years there has been a notable increase of interest surrounding music within neuropsychology, cognitive and computational sciences for the remarkable reaction that the human brain undergoes when it experiences music. For a comprehensive survey of these research see Levitin (2006).

redefinition of its own considerations and models. I believe this criteria for examining music can be more effectively scrutinized through philosophical inquiry and critical reflection. In my view, writing about music can be a daunting task considering the diverse criteria by which music can be examined, the variety of disciplines that can be involved in studying music and the complexity of meanings that might be revealed within music.

This commentary involves not only writing about music but writing about ones own music, which inevitably leads to an even greater challenge. Having experienced the creative process that resulted in the submitted musical output, I am almost too aware of its highly associative, multilayered, holistic and subjective nature. Moreover, as a musician that is absorbed in music practice, I am also extremely aware that music has a multiplicity of meanings—not only the definition of music is contingent to social, historical and philosophical conditions, but also music as it is perceived and experienced conveys multiple meanings—a self-evident fact that for me is too difficult to ignore. For that reason, I will not attempt to embrace a reductionist approach (which would focus only on a limited area of musical enquiry through rigorous empirical investigation) to writing this commentary, to avoid the risk of ignoring the intuitive character of my own creative process and the complex nature and meaning of music. Instead, I decided to write in a style that combines self-reflective, speculative and multidisciplinary arguments with specialized and technical information regarding to how music is created and performed. I consider this approach to writing better suited to describe the type of critical reflection that goes on as part of my creative process, which deals with problems that at times can be concerned only with the technical aspects of how music is created and performed at times attempts to situate the creative work and the musical result within a wider—cultural, political, philosophical, etc.—context. At the same time, I also recognize that while attempting to explore the interconnections between music's multiple meanings, I am running the risk that my arguments might loose accuracy, methodological rigor and empirical validity and that my claims at times may sound overambitious or as sweeping statements. However, I am convinced that this style of writing represents at best my aesthetic and musical concerns and that considering the difficulty that lies in writing about ones own creative work . . .

Writing as self-reflection... on ones own work.

On methodology... Meta-commentary, etc. The nature of the submitted work calls for meta-commentary...

Chapters are independent but refer to each other.

First 4 chaps are meta-commentary

First 2 chaps are introductory

In Chapter 2, I will give theoretical background based on Rancière's views on the relationship between aesthetics and politics. Additionally, I undertake the task of trying to apply his concepts as they pertain to music.

In Chapter 3—motivation

In Chapter 4—technology and musical strategies

In Chapter 5—appropriation

In Chapter 6—computer applications

In Chapter 7—compositions

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