MUSICOLOGY OR *MUSIKWISSENSCHAFT?*
A STUDY OF THE WORK OF CARL DAHLHAUS

by

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PREFACE

Two brief notes on style and spelling are in order for this trans-Atlantic thesis. For reasons of convenience (namely British software) I have chosen to use British spellings. The works from which I have quoted, often at some length, have in several cases followed American usage, however; therefore I beg the reader's indulgence as 'aesthetic' and 'esthetic,' 'judgement' and 'judgment,' and so on crop up in close proximity.

In referring to books by Dahlhaus in translation, I have adopted shortened versions of titles. Below is a table of these abbreviations.

Analysis	*Analysis and Value Judgment*
Between	*Between Romanticism and Modernism*
Esthetics	*Esthetics of Music*
Foundations	*Foundations of Music History*
Idea	*The Idea of Absolute Music*
Realism	*Realism in Nineteenth-Century Music*
Schoenberg	*Schoenberg and the New Music*
Nineteenth-Century Music	*Nineteenth-Century Music*

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INTRODUCTION

'Musicology or *Musikwissenschaft*?' is a question which concerns, not a choice of language, but the scope of a discipline. The two terms ought, etymologically, to mean roughly the same thing, but in fact at present they have very different connotations. Joseph Kerman puts it thus:

> Adapted from the older French term *musicologie*, itself an analogue to the nineteenth-century German *Musikwissenschaft*, the word [musicology] was originally understood (as *Musikwissenschaft* still is) to cover thinking about, research into, and knowledge of all possible aspects of music....
> But in academic practice, and in broad general usage, musicology has come to have a much more constricted meaning. It has come to mean the study of the history of Western music in the high-art tradition. ... Musicology is perceived as dealing essentially with the factual, the documentary, the verifiable, the anaysable, the positivistic.[1]

Carl Dahlhaus is a German music historian whose works, now being translated into English, provide a direct challenge to the narrowness of focus of Anglophone musicology. It is the purpose of this thesis to explore the nature of that challenge by exploring some of the key ideas in Dahlhaus' writing.

Carl Dahlhaus died in 1989, at the age of 61. There were not many obituaries in the English musicology journals, but those that appeared were not cautious in their assessment of his contribution. Kerman wrote:

> No-one has taught us as much as Dahlhaus about the complexities and ambivalence of music historiography, or urged historical reflection on us with a more schoolmasterly insistence. And no one has shown more movingly how a historian prone to existential despair can persevere in the historical enterprise. ... [his] accomplishment dwarfs that of any other musicologist of our time.[2]

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[1] *Musicology* (London: Fontana paperbacks, 1985), p. 11.

[2] "Recollections: Carl Dahlhaus, 1928-1989," *19th Century Music* XIII (Summer 1989): 57-58.

Those are, in part, fighting words, since Kerman and the journal he edits, *19th Century Music*, have put themselves firmly in Dahlhaus' camp, and against some attitudes that are firmly entrenched in American and English musicology.[3] Nevertheless, interest in Dahlhaus is not confined to a rebellious minority in the discipline, at least to judge by the number of times he is casually cited and the attitudes of his reviewers.[4] Eleven of his books have been translated into English to date, and he was a contributor to the *The New Grove Dictionary of Music and Musicians*.[5] The translations of Dahlhaus' works are particularly indicative of widespread interest in a field where reading proficiency in German is almost mandatory. (In fact, many of Dahlhaus' works were reviewed in English journals years before they were translated.)

Dahlhaus' works do indeed represent far more than scholarly additions to the body of musicological knowledge. Three of the first books to be translated were precisely those which are least specific and most theoretical (one is tempted to say, least factual and most speculative), while several more specific monographs, analyses and studies remain to be translated. These first books represent a direct challenge to the way English-speaking musicology conceives of itself as a discipline.

In England and America, music historians have avoided philosophy in general, preferring to adopt 'scientific' methods that center on ascertainable facts like compositional dates, composers' biographies and surroundings, and the like. On the larger scale, this process usually leads to a history of styles that arise, flourish, and decline within a given period, or

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[3]This is shown, for example, in the fact that the University of California press, the publisher of the journal, has published two works by Dahlhaus in translation as part of a series edited by Kerman, and by Kerman's comments in an essay, "The State of Academic Music Criticism," published in *On Criticizing Music: Five Philosophical Perspectives*, ed. Kingsley Price (Baltimore: Johns Hopkins University Press, 1981) pp. 38-54. Kerman writes of the interdependence of analysis (considered since Schenker to be akin to science) and criticism, a theme taken up by Dahlhaus in *Analyse und Werturteil* in 1970.

[4]One reviewer complained that *Foundations of Music History* took too defensive a stance. "Since history is at least as well entrenched as any of its rivals, and Dahlhaus himself is about as well respected as it is possible for mortals to be, the polemics seem pointless." (Francis Sparshott, "Deeper Still," review of *Foundations*, in *The Musical Times*, 125 (November 1984): 645.

[5] Dahlhaus contributed the articles on "Tonality" and on "Harmony" to the 20 volume dictionary, edited by Stanley Sadie (London: Macmillan, 1980).

to history as a succession of heroic geniuses. Dahlhaus presents a challenge by insisting that philosophical as well as factual awareness must inform history, and that common methods are not as value-free and objective as has been claimed. This is the overall thrust of the three most foundational books; elsewhere Dahlhaus has devoted major essays, and even whole books to exploring the precise meaning and significance of terms like 'absolute music' (in *The Idea of absolute Music*)[6] and 'musical realism' (in *Realism in Nineteenth Century Music*)[7] that are frequently used but seldom defined in music histories. Roger Hollingrake, reviewing *Realism*, comments:

> It is also doubtful whether any English writer would be likely to expend so much time and effort on a purely abstract terminology. Is this an oversight? — for it takes candour to admit that we do not know the meaning of the words we habitually use.[8]

The same could be said of most American musicologists, I suspect. Dahlhaus' interest in terminology and its vagaries is connected to his interest in the 'history of ideas,' which in (his) practice means how the influence of contemporary trends in thought are manifested in the work of a particular composer – for instance, how the late nineteenth century literary idea of realism affected the operas of Bizet, Verdi, and Mussorgsky, among others. This approach has its detractors:

> But those readers whose cast of mind is more earthbound than his may suffer some uneasiness. Do social conditions, political forces, economic systems, musical and theatrical institutions, the logistics and mechanics of music-making and the peculiarities of individuals — in short, the mundane — never tug at the threads that pass between aesthetics and art? .... anyone with a pragmatic or materialist turn of thought will be dissatisfied with either logical patterns or paradoxes serving as explanations ... the discovery of proximate causes ... may be what is needed.[9]

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[6] *The Idea of Absolute Music*, translated by Roger Lustig (Chicago: the University of Chicago Press, 1989). Translation of: *Die Idee der absoluten Musik* (Kassel: Bärenreiterverlag, 1978). Hereafter referred to as *Idea*.

[7] *Realism in Nineteenth-Century Music*, translated by Mary Whittall (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1985). Translation of: *Musikalischer Realismus: Zur Musikgeschichte des 19. Jahrhunderts* (Munich: R. Piper & Co. Verlag, 1982). Hereafter referred to as *Realism*.

[8] Roger Hollingrake, review of *Realism*, in *Music and Letters*, vol 67 (1986): 212

[9] Christopher Hatch, review of *Realism*, in *19th Century Music*, 10 (1986):187

'Proximate causes' are by no means ignored in Dahlhaus' œuvre, and the book in question explicitly sets out to trace and define a common idea in late nineteenth century thought, realism, rather than to give a comprehensive accounting for the composers and works considered. What the reviewer betrays is the not uncommon uneasiness of English-speaking musicology (whether influenced by positivist or Marxian ideas) at the very idea of including data from aesthetics or the history of ideas.

This is precisely what Dahlhaus does most enthusiastically. Of the ten books translated by 1990, three (*Esthetics of Music*,[10] *Analysis and Value Judgment*,[11] and *Foundations of Music History* [12]) deal with the philosophical foundations of musicology; three more (*Studies on the origin of harmonic tonality*,[13] *Idea* and *Realism*) trace the development of ideas and, in the first case, of compositional techniques; two (*Schoenberg and the New Music*[14] and *Between Romanticism and Modernism*[15]) are collections of essays, of which some trace ideas (as in the essay in *Schoenberg* on the idea of 'new' music[16]); and one, *Richard Wagner's Music Dramas*,[17] concerns

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[10] *Esthetics of Music*, translated by William W. Austin (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1982, 1988). Translation of *Musikästhetik* (Cologne: Musikverlag Hans Gerig, 1967). Hereafter referred to as *Esthetics*.

[11] *Analysis and Value Judgment*, translated by Siegmund Levarie [Monographs in Musicology No. 1] (New York: Pendragon Press, 1983). Translation of: *Analyse und Werturteil* [*Musikpädagogik, Forschung und Lehre*, volume 8] (Mainz: B. Schotts Söhne, 1970). Hereafter referred to as *Analysis*.

[12] *Foundations of Music History*, translated by J. B. Robinson (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1983, 1989). Translation of: *Grundlagen der Musikgeschichte* (Cologne: Musikverlag Hans Gerig, 1977). Hereafter referred to as *Foundations*.

[13] *Studies on the Origin of Harmonic Tonality*, translated by Robert O. Gjerdingen (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 1990). Translation of *Untersuchungen über die Enstehung der harmonischen Tonalität*. [Saarbrücker Studien zur Musikwissenschaft, Bd. 2] (Kassel u.a. 1968, 1988).

[14] *Schoenberg and the New Music*, translated by Derrick Puffett and Alfred Clayton (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1987). Translations of essays published in various places by Carl Dahlhaus between 1964 and 1984, many of which had been previously collected (but not translated) in *Schönberg und Andere*, Mainz, 1978. Hereafter referred to as *Schoenberg*.

[15] *Between Romanticism and Modernism*, translated by Mary Whittall, with a translation of Friedrich Nietzsche's "On Music and Words" by Walter Kaufmann (Berkeley CA: The University of California Press, 1980, 1989). Translation of *Zwischen Romantik und Moderne: Vier Studien zur Musikgeschichte des späteren 19. Jahrhunderts [Berliner Musikwissenschaftliche Arbeiten]* (Munich: Musikverlag Emil Katzbichler, 1974). Hereafter referred to as *Between*.

[16] " 'New Music' as historical category," *Schoenberg*, pp. 1-13.

the development of one idea in one composer's work. Only the remaining book, *Nineteenth-Century Music*,[18] makes any attempt to be a history in the usual sense. The works in translation give a somewhat skewed vision of Dahlhaus' œuvre; many of the as yet untranslated books and more of the myriad articles are the more generally expected analyses and monographs. There remain 15 untranslated books[19] and '*selbständige schriften*' according to the bibliography in the *Festschrift* published for Dahlhaus' sixtieth birthday.[20]

That Dahlhaus presents a considerable challenge to Anglophone musicology is almost palpable in the reviews of his books in English and American journals. There is considerable variety among reactions to the challenge. For instance, one reviewer comments that *Nineteenth-Century Music* is "a comprehensive survey and a rich pictorial record."[21] Another says that it, as Dahlhaus' first attempt at an extended narration, "goes a long way towards justifying an approach to history not much favoured by American musicology."[22]; but a third[23] denies that it presents a chronological history at all. This third reviewer complains that Dahlhaus ignores biography and the individualism of the age.[24] But according to someone else, "Carl Dahlhaus ... takes his stand on the claim that, as a rule,

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[17] *Richard Wagner's Music Dramas*, translated by Mary Whittall (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1979). Translation of *Richard Wagners Musikdramen* (Velber: 1971).

[18] *Nineteenth-Century Music*, translated by J. Bradford Robinson [California studies in 19th century music, volume 5] (Berkeley, CA: The University of California Press, 1989). Translation of *Die Musik des 19. Jahrhunderts* [Neues Handbuch der Musikwissenschaft, volume 6] (Wiesbaden: Akademische Verlagsgesellschaft Athenaion, 1980).

[19] One more book by Dahlhaus has been translated and published recently, too recently to be included in this thesis: *Ludwig van Beethoven: approaches to his music*, translated by Mary Whittall (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1991). It is a translation of *Ludwig van Beethoven und seine Zeit*, [*Große Komponisten und ihre Zeit*] (Laaber, 1987).

[20] *Das Musikalische Kunstwerk: Geschichte, Ästhetik, Theorie. Festschrift Carl Dahlhaus zum 60 Geburtstag* (Laaver: Laaver Verlag, 1988).

[21] Ann Manly, review of *Die Musik des 19. Jahrhunderts* in *Brio* 18 n.1(1981):41-2

[22] Douglas Johnson, review of *Die Musik des 19. Jahrhunderts*, in the *Journal of the American Musicological Society*, 36 (1983):532-43

[23] Serge Gut, review of *Die Musik des 19. Jahrhunderts*, in the *Revue de Musicologie*, vol. 69 (1983): 120-127.

[24] "La méthode structuraliste n'est pas appropriée pour rendre compte des personalité transcendents; au contraire, elle les trahit." *ibid.*

the study of 19th century music begins and ends with the study of individuals."[25] Prose that is brilliant to one reviewer seems tortured to another; one praises Dahlhaus for his breadth and universality, and another calls him narrow or parochial. One marks his membership in a tradition, another praises him for rejecting all received ideas. The strains of comprehending an alien mode of thought show in misunderstandings over terms like tonality.[26] But the main debate concerns whether or not his approach is valuable and legitimate or not.

Nearly all English speaking reviewers comment on how difficult Dahlhaus is to read, whether in translation or in German. In either case, the complaint is that it is too dense and convoluted, that it embodies all the worst tendencies of German academic writing. And most of them complain that his focus is too narrowly German, as well. (The one exception to this trend is the reviewer of *Nineteenth-Century Music* who thought the book did a good job of drawing attention to less known, non-German works.[27]) A third common complaint is the scarcity of significant English titles in his bibliographies, and among his references. The main drawback to Dahlhaus, according to most reviewers, is that he is too German. "Quite stiflingly German," according to Sparshott.[28]

Dahlhaus' Germanness is, in a way, central to the difficulties that Anglophone aestheticians have had with him. Here, the differences run deep. Dahlhaus' historiography offends by involving aesthetics openly, but is still deeply respected. Dahlhaus' aesthetics invokes professional scorn. One

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[25]Roger Hollingrake, review of *Between*, in Music *and Letters*, 63 (1982):136

[26]Tonality is understood in German music theory to refer only to the major-minor tonal system, and in American music theory to mean any music that has any hierarchy of tones. Music can be tonal in one system and not in the other; medieval music, for instance, is tonal in the sense that it has a hierarchy of tones, and is not tonal insofar as it is not in the major-minor system.

[27]Douglas Johnson, review of *Die Musik des 19. Jahrhunderts*, in *Journal of the American Musicological Society* 36 (1983): 532-43.

[28]"The book's thought world is, however, almost exclusively and quite stiflingly German, and an ingrate might wonder whether anyone who needed a translation could really be at home in it." Francis Sparshott, "Deeper Still," a review of *Foundations* in *The Musical Times* 125 (November 1984):645.

reviewer complains that *Esthetics* provides neither history nor system, and leaves out "dozens" of figures[29]. Roger Scruton writes:

> At the end one is left with the impression that, had the word 'music' not occurred in the title, the volume might just as well have been about say, ice cream, or razor blades. Certainly, when summarized in this form, the theories considered cast as much light upon ice cream and razor blades as they do upon music.[30]

That kind of comment arises, I believe, out of the fact that the German aesthetic tradition has an almost completely different agenda than the Anglo-American tradition does. One might say that English speaking music aesthetics is concerned with **how** music means (or is understood), while German speaking music aesthetics is concerned with <u>what</u> music means (or has been understood to mean). This is, of course, a gross over-simplification, but it serves admirably as a rough rule of thumb, and it points up exactly the differences between Dahlhaus and the more philosophical of his English reviewers. Even Hanslick, much beloved by Anglophone aesthetics for his resolutely 'absolute' stance equating form and content seems to me to be concerned to show that music's **beauty** arises out of its form, not that its form has any inherent referential meaning – or any meaning at all, beyond simply being beautiful. That music has strong emotional effects Hanslick did not deny, but his theory is not a theory that attempts to link them with abstract music, as do the theories of, for example, Langer, Scruton, Meyer and others.

The most influential Germans, on the other hand, have either, like Kant and Hanslick, concerned themselves with explaining music's beauty, or observed music's emotional effects and simply concentrated on what that emotional content or meaning could be, as for example Hegel, Schopenhauer, Nietzsche, Adorno, and Bloch. In German eyes great music gives humanity intimations of the Absolute, or the world-spirit, or the composer's life, of utopia or the bankruptcy of modern society, or of Will, or whatever. Explanations of exactly how music is able to do this are generally **not** the

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[29]Edward A. Lippman, review of *Esthetics* in *Notes* 40 (1984):558.

[30]"The Aesthetics of Music" *RMA Research Chronicle* 17: 116, 1981.

main feature of these studies and tend, when they appear, to be sketchy and vague.

There is a long history of the aesthetics of emotion in music among German writers (against which Hanslick rebelled, in favour of an aesthetics of beauty). They have posited a range of relationships between music and emotion, from emotions depicted to emotion expressed. But I repeat, German writers do not concern themselves with the mechanism of the relationship as have recent anglophone music aesthetics. Those German thinkers who have considered the mechanics of musical meaning have considered themselves scientists rather than philosophers, as for example Helmholtz, the pioneer of musical acoustics, and Schenker, who sought to systematize and render musical analysis completely mathematical. (These are thinkers who, predictably enough, have had enormous influence on music theory in English.) To explore in depth these differences is beyond the scope of this thesis; my intention is only to signal the difference, and with it a possible reason for the indifferent or hostile reception Dahlhaus has had among anglophone aestheticians and a possible reason for his omission of major works in English from his bibliographies. Many of the omitted works are simply irrelevant to his interests.[31]

The purpose of this thesis is to explore Dahlhaus' approach to *Musikwissenshaft*, to musicology in the widest sense of 'thinking about music.' Why is it that Dahlhaus rejects the partitioning of musicology into the self-contained disciplines of music history, aesthetics, theory, and analysis? Though he sees these categories as heuristically useful distinctions, he routinely blurs the boundaries between them, as if a thinker and writer on music who would be thorough must be well-versed in all of them. Well-versed Dahlhaus certainly is, for he refers to writers not only

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[31] The omissions from *Esthetics* are less numerous than Scruton claims in his review, at least in the English edition. Meyer, Langer, Gurney and Cooke, all mentioned as neglected by Scruton, all appear in the annotated bibliography (which was added by Dahlhaus and his translator for the translation — there was no bibliography at all in the German edition), though there is no mention of them in the text.

on every aspect of music, but also on general philosophy and historiography as well.

The place to begin this investigation is with Dahlhaus' attitude towards history. He refers to 'historicism' as a basic component of modern ideas about history, and by implication includes himself among those holding historicistic attitudes. What does Dahlhaus mean by 'historicism,' and what does it imply for his historiography? Historicism, Dahlhaus writes, actually refers to more than one attitude towards the musical past, one of them 'practical,' a matter of relying on the past to provide the music played in the present, and the other 'theoretical,' an attitude which emphasizes the mutability of music and the distance of the present from the past. The two historicisms, while not necessarily incompatible, are seldom found together, but Dahlhaus exhibits both of them in their less extreme forms, for he dwells on the alienation produced by historical awareness and the mutability of musical traditions (theoretical historicism), **and** he staunchly defends the idea of the musical canon and the durability of the musical work of art (practical historicism). Dahlhaus writes that the two historicisms, respectively, historicize the aesthetic and aestheticize the historical, an enigmatic phrase that provides the key to the blurring by Dahlhaus of the boundaries between history and historical judgement on the one hand and aesthetics and aesthetic judgement on the other. How can the historical be aestheticized? How is our understanding of the history of music tied up with aesthetic understanding and aesthetic judgements? How, conversely, can aesthetics be historicized? How is aesthetics, often regarded as a systematic and normative subsection of philosophy, bound up with history and our understanding of the past?

This thesis falls into four chapters. The first explores Dahlhaus' historicism, in the context of other understandings of historicism and in relation to tradition, a key aspect of Dahlhaus' understanding of our relationship to the past. The second examines the effect of this historicism on Dahlhaus' historiography, and addresses the question of the aestheticization of history. The third examines systematically Dahlhaus' writing on aesthetics (with the caveat that Dahlhaus did not present his aesthetics systematically), asking how he historicizes aesthetics. The

fourth looks more closely at the practical application of this historicized aesthetic, that is to say, at Dahlhaus' theory, or rather, contributions towards a theory of criticism. In conclusion, I sum up the answers to the questions asked here, and present the positive things to be learned by English-speaking musicology from Dahlhaus' writing. Because it is as a challenge to the English-speaking musicological tradition that I examine Dahlhaus, I have relied on those of his works presently available in English translations, among which are included nearly all of the more foundational and theoretical of his writings.

Chapter 1

HISTORICISM

Dahlhaus writes at some length in *Foundations* about historicism, in the process of discussing the role of history and the relation of the present to the past. Historicism seems to be in Dahlhaus' eyes a basic component of how modern historians and others relate to the past. But precisely what historicism means to Dahlhaus must be inferred from what he writes about the relationship of the present to the past. In this chapter I will discuss Dahlhaus' historicist understanding of history, focussing on three aspects of his understanding: that music is 'historical through and through'; that 'History' is a myth; and that it is through tradition, the 'presence of the past,' that we relate to the past. But first, since 'historicism' is a term that has meant different things to different people, I turn to Maurice Mandelbaum's article 'Historicism' in the *Encyclopedia of Philosophy* for some background and clarification.[1]

Definition

The term 'historicist' or 'historicism' [*Historismus*] has had a long and checkered history, having meant quite different things to different people. Sometimes it has been used as a term of disparagement, and at other times, as in Dahlhaus, as the name of an advocated stance. For some it refers to a belief in History as a single, inexorable development, while for others it implies an emphasis on the mutability of all things, That is, sometimes 'historicism' refers to a species of determinism, and sometimes to a kind of relativism.

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[1] *The Encyclopedia of Philosophy*, ed. Paul Edwards (New York: Macmillan, 1967), 4:22-25.

The determinist and relativist interpretations are not necessarily contradictory. The Dutch philosopher Herman Dooyeweerd,[2] for example, used 'historicism' to mean a kind of determinism where all values are relative to the particular point history has reached in its amoral but inexorable process. Dooyeweerd himself held a teleological view of history that would itself be called 'historicist' by Karl Popper, who used the term for anyone who postulated a pre-determined end to history.[3] Usage emphasizing the mutability and the particuliarity of things is more common than usage emphasizing determinism, according to Mandelbaum.

Mandelbaum, having summed up historicism's complex and contradictory history, defined historicism thus:

> Historicism is the belief that an adequate understanding of the nature of anything and an adequate assessment of its value are to be gained by considering it in terms of the place it occupied and the role it played within a process of development.4

He adds that historicism's challenge to established thought "lay partly in its tendency to link evaluation with genetic explanation," going on to say that "historicism involves a genetic model of evaluation and an attempt to base all evaluation **upon the nature of the historical process itself**" (my emphasis).[5]

This last sentence provides a key for unlocking what any individual writer means by this most equivocal of terms. Usually, any term ending in 'ism' involves an elevation of the idea named to the status of over-all explanatory principle or, put another way, object of worship: hence 'scientism,' 'biblicism,' etc. Historicisms thus find in history the source of explanation and value. However, 'History' is itself a term with many definitions and uses. The thing to inquire after is what the historicist believes about the nature of history. History can be seen in many ways: as an inexorable progress towards a goal; as a story comprised of myriad inter-related stories; as the result of regular patterns which constitute

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[2]Cf. "History, Historicism, and Norms" in *Roots of Western Culture* (Toronto: Wedge, 1979).
[3]Cf. Karl R. Popper, *The Poverty of Historicism,* (London and Boston: 1957).
[4] Mandelbaum, op. cit. p. 24
[5] ibid.

historical laws not unlike natural laws; as random chance or, contrarily, as the working presence of a loving God. Not all views of history are amenable to any sort of historicism, for some understand history to be subservient or secondary to other forces. But the scope for a wide range of historicisms is clear enough.

Understanding of Dahlhaus' historicism, accordingly, requires comprehension of his understanding of music and its history. What is his understanding of history? What does he mean that music is historical through and through and that 'History' in the singular is a myth?

Music as 'Historical through and through'

The phrase 'historical through and through' is attributed by Dahlhaus to Adorno, though its exact source is never mentioned. By 'history' Adorno meant social history, and he laboured to construct a sociology of music. He also believed that music is made out of material such as chords, rhythm, harmony and the like, that has historical 'tendencies' to develop in certain ways. He related these tendencies to social reality: "by material Adorno meant nothing less than the objective spirit and the way it is manifested in music" (*Schoenberg*, p. 159). Dahlhaus pointed out the level of abstraction required by this kind of 'material thinking':

> 'Art,' writes Theodor W. Adorno in his *Aesthetische Theorie*, 'is historical solely on the basis of separate and individual works considered on their own merits, and not by virtue of their external relationships, let alone the influence they supposedly exercised on each other' (*Aesthetische Theorie*, p. 263). Yet when we compare the historiographical axiom implicit in this proposition with Adorno's actual writings on the philosophy of history (in his *Philosophie der neuen Musik* he illustrated his thesis of the historical movement of musical material by using abstract categories such as 'chord,' 'dissonance' and 'counterpoint' rather than analyses of works), then the contradiction becomes only too obvious, and no amount of assurance that these categories derive from analyses will remove it. This is not a case of an incidental shortcoming, or of failure on the part of the author, but of a conflict of principles that seems practically insoluble: how to reach agreement on a permissible amount of abstraction that will keep a music history from suffocating in details without being so far removed from individual works as to obliterate all sense of the particular, the unreduplicatable and individual, so that nothing survives of the intended history of composition but a history of musical techniques (*Foundations*, p. 29).

The problem here is the age-old one of relating universals to particulars, and Dahlhaus does not find that Adorno's idea of historical musical material does a satisfactory job of it.

Dahlhaus also addressed this idea of musical material (adopted by the musical avant-garde of the 50s as well as by Adorno) in the essay "A rejection of material thinking?" (*Schoenberg*, pp. 274-287). Dahlhaus describes any appeal to the tendencies of the material as fetishism.

> ... whether it was the history 'sedimented' in notes as Adorno would have it, the 'tendency' of which was carried to its logical conclusion by the serial music of the 1950s, or the noise material whose suitability for music or even anti-music was explored in the 1960s [championed as 'natural' rather than 'historical'] ... people worship an idol of their own making ... the individual submits to a force whose objectivity is an illusion, and whose substance in fact stems from the individual himself (*Schoenberg*, p. 274).

Dahlhaus notes the demise of belief in the tendency of the material, but complains that along with material thinking composers wish to discard music theory and the concept of the work. Dahlhaus calls for the retention of theory and the work in a revived 'dialogue model.'

That music is thoroughly historical does not, then, for Dahlhaus mean that it is imbued with historical material tendencies, as it did for Adorno. What does Dahlhaus mean? The call for a dialogue model provides a clue. Music for Dahlhaus is thoroughly historical because it is thoroughly conventional – in the same way that language is conventional. Dahlhaus accepts (with reservations) the formalist idea that music communicates when it fulfills expectations, and is expressive when it thwarts them. Dahlhaus' understanding of the balance between comprehension and expression I will touch on in chapter four; for the moment the point is that what is expected of music – the conventions – arise and change in history. They are invented by and shared among people, rather than given by nature, or by an objective history. Everything about music, beyond the acoustic possibilities of strings, pipes and skins, is conventional, and so historical, has arisen in historical circumstances, and changes over time. This is what Dahlhaus means by 'historical through and through.' There is nothing about music that was not invented by someone at some time and shared with others and given a meaning within a particular time and culture.

'History' as a Myth

Dahlhaus opposed Adorno on two fronts. He vehemently objected to the use of works of musical art as documents in social history, neatly demolishing Adorno and other's methods for achieving this reduction of music history to sociology in the essay "The musical work of art as a subject of sociology" (*Schoenberg*, pp. 234-247). This opposition to the subsuming of music history under social history points to the other facet of Dahlhaus' historicism: that 'History' in the singular is a myth.

Here, myth means more than simply 'falsehood.' Dahlhaus treats the idea of 'History' in the singular as an unprovable postulate, or a vision of the unattainable:

> 'History,' in that singular form which, while trivial today, is actually a paradox that was not discovered or construed as such until the eighteenth century, is not a conceivable subject for 'history' as an empirical discipline. The existence of an integral, holistic 'History' which is more than a bundle of individual 'histories' is at best an historiological hypothesis; but it can never be grounded in fact, or at least never to our satisfaction (*Foundations*, p. 123).

The reference in *Foundations* is to Marx's concept of 'History': a subject in the sense of an active force, rather than an object of study. 'History' is, if you will, the shadow of a future point of view, an understanding of history as it will be seen from the future Utopia – an object of faith, and one with which the historian may well decide to do without, especially if, like Dahlhaus, he or she has serious doubts about the feasibility and desirability of writing narrative history:

> To avoid the illusion of seamless continuity the modern historian will even upset the course of a narrative by interposing cumbersome and contradictory facts (*Foundations*, p. 48).

In other words, Dahlhaus questions both the idea of a unified progress in history, knowable only in retrospect and from a God's eye view, and the illusion of the God's eye view created in extensive narrative histories. Narrative needs a subject (in the sense of acting force used above), and music history doesn't provide any obvious candidates:

> 'Histories' in the plural, with their individual or collective subjects and their amenability to traditional or modern narrative methods, are subsumed into an all-enveloping 'History' that is a process without subject. It makes eminently good sense to talk about a history of the nineteenth-century tone poem, for example; and the narrative subject — the tone poem — does have a history in the sense that it underwent changes. Yet these changes that make up its history were in turn offshoots of currents and cross-currents within a larger process which, for its part, had neither goal nor subject. 'Music' writ large does not lend itself to narrative history (*Foundations*, pp. 48-9).

In fact, according to Dahlhaus, the 'subject' of written history is the historian (a matter for consideration in the next chapter). Here, I want to call attention to the points Dahlhaus' dilemmas have in common with Mandelbaum's definition of historicism.

Historicism as Geneticism?

According to Mandelbaum, in reference to any given item under investigation, historicism concerns itself with : "the place it occupied and the role it played within a process of development" and bases all evaluation on "the nature of the historical process itself." On the one hand, Dahlhaus has definite doubts about the idea of historical development, as he expressed, for instance, in the essay "Progress and the Avant-Garde" (*Schoenberg*, pp. 14-22): "Progress in music is not like that in science, but can be compared to that in philosophy, which is similarly debatable and which seems to consist, inasmuch as it exists at all, less in the solution of problems than in their discovery" (p. 22). This is hardly an enthusiastic espousal of the idea.[6] On the other hand, he does focus on "a larger process which ... had neither goal nor subject." Dahlhaus' historicism, then, while precisely not the sort that relates everything to progress towards a goal, does seek to explain everything in terms of historical processes.

Mandelbaum suggests that historicism implies geneticism, the belief that becoming is more important than being, or that a thing's history is more important than its structure: "historicism involves a genetic model of explanation ...." Dahlhaus is primarily interested in how things have

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[6]Not that development and progress are exactly synonymous, but the idea of development does imply a goal of some sort, it seems to me, which is something Dahlhaus is loath to postulate.

changed, rather than any unchanging structure or essence they might contain.

History functions as a way of relating the past to the present:

> The worn-out cliché about the true nature of an era only being recognisable in retrospect is merely a perverse way of saying that we consider things that survive the past to be more essential and characteristic than things that perish (*Foundations*, p. 112).

And the importance of anything to the present derives not only from its original structure (though that is important) but also from its subsequent history – its 'reception history.' This is especially true of phenomena like folk music, where "the idea of an 'authentic version' completely evaporates" (*Foundations*, p. 165), and like national music, which Dahlhaus argues becomes national by virtue of being perceived as such.

> Although the national character of folk music is – at least partly – the result of a latter-day, "sentimental" reinterpretation, that does not mean that the feelings and associations linked with it are in any way invalid or unfounded. To treat a feature that emerges at a secondary stage as immaterial is to fall into the trap of assuming that the essence of a thing derives exclusively from its original state. But there is not reason to regard the exterior appearance of a thing as disposable simply because it formed later (*Between*, p. 94).

Here, meaning and value are related neither to origin, nor to structure, but to what a thing has become, and could cease to be. It is difficult to say just how Dahlhaus understands the relationship of a thing's position in history and its value: on the one hand, he views a work's historical importance largely in terms of its importance in the present-day repertoire and insists that the genesis of an idea is not necessarily indicative of its validity; on the other, he views aesthetic/historical criteria like originality and epigonism as indispensible (at least for the present) and excercizes himself over the 'non-contemporaneity of the contemporaneous,' that is, over things that seem not to fit in with their historical surroundings, as the romanticism (or neo-romanticism, as Dahlhaus prefers to call it) of late nineteenth-century music does not correspond to the prevailing *Zeitgeist* of realism. Becoming is more important than being for Dahlhaus, but the value of a thing is not necessarily determined by its place in history – perhaps because musical

works do not stay put in history, but belong to the present as well as the past.

Dahlhaus' historicism emphasizes mutability – though not as radically as the historicism he attributes to the avant-garde: "We might almost speak of historicism without history, the historical aspect being taken to reside solely in the element of mutability" (*Foundations*, p. 7). Dahlhaus himself has no intention of leaving out history! Nevertheless, it is this awareness of mutability which he emphasizes as the outcome of historicism, and it is the changes undergone by such things as works, beliefs, and ideas which chiefly occupy his attention as historian – *The Idea of Absolute Music*, for instance, is a book dedicated to charting the vicissitudes of a single idea.

Tradition: the Presence of the Past

For Dahlhaus, the practical implication of the historicist's awareness of mutability is a degree of alienation from the past, and hence from tradition, for Dahlhaus characterizes tradition as the presence of the past. He dwells on the relationship between tradition and historicism at some length – in fact, he devotes an entire chapter to it in *Foundations*.

What is tradition? Dahlhaus sums up tradition as "the presence of the past," which is a useful, if minimal, start. He hints at a more delimited, structured definition when he discusses how a notion of the continuity of tradition can provide connections between discrete works. 'Tradition' can refer, for Dahlhaus (and I believe he is wise in this usage) to a fairly narrow phenomenon such as a genre or, as in his discussions of the 'canon,' that is, those works form the past that are widely accepted as 'classics' and therefore as somehow authoritative, it can refer to a very broad grouping of phenomena, as the canon encompasses works in many, many forms and styles, from many communities and many periods. Moreover, in the way the canon is handed down and used, it encompasses not only works but also attitudes, aesthetic beliefs, and habits of practice as diverse as performance practice and audience behaviour. These phenomena have in common the ability to be handed down through time. They may change in the handing down (early motets differ greatly from late motets), but the change

is gradual and manifests a substantial amount of continuity (they're all still recognizably motets).

Dahlhaus' main interest in tradition is not in defining it, but in articulating the relationships groups of people can have with it, from unconscious traditionalism to the anti-traditionalism of the avant-garde. For further help in defining tradition we must turn to other writers who have considered tradition.

Alexander Goehr[7] understands tradition as change with continuity: "Tradition is not a matter of hard and fast rules, and innovation occurs within it, gradually and gently modifying its character .... Tradition results from a conscious and deliberate acceptance."[8]

How does this change occur, and how is the fact of change within tradition to be reconciled to the common conception of tradition as that which does not change? William Rowe suggests that this common perception of tradition sees only half the picture. Rowe suggested that a theory of tradition should recognize its structure of what is handed down (the *traditum*) and the handing down thereof:

> Tradition as *traditum* appears resistant to change, appears to be a form of opposition to history. Nevertheless, the tradition becomes vulnerable just at the point of its being passed down. What is traditional is vulnerable by nature because it needs to be passed on in order to remain the same. In short, the sameness of the *traditum* is conditioned essentially by its subjectivity to the changing process through which it passes on to future generations.
>
> How shall we understand this? Does the historical identity of the *traditum* display a kind of covenant structure according to which 'faith precedes security,' a structure requiring that one "give over" (*transdare*) the *traditum* so it can become what it is? ...[That] is my assessment of this fact about tradition....[9]

In other words, the vulnerability of tradition to change in transmission is an important part of its identity as tradition. The fluid

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[7]British composer and lecurer who dealt with the traditions of classical music in the 1987 Reith lectures, published as "The Survival of the Symphony" over six issues of *The Listener*, vol. 118, from 19 November to 31 December 1987.

[8] *The Listener*, 118 (3 December, 1987): 26.

[9]William Rowe, "Writing and Tradition," unpublished paper given for the Inter-Disciplinary seminar on tradition at the Institute for Christian Studies in the fall of 1988, pp.4-5.

identity of tradition need not be seen as threatening, but rather as a matter of the responsibility of one generation to the next, and of each generation to what it has received.

Rowe's conception of tradition tends to treat tradition as a kind of text, passed from reader to reader, interpreted differently by each. In reference to any canon of **works**, this is helpful, but Dahlhaus and Goehr both suggest that what is handed down – traditioned – in musical communities includes far more than (or at times simply other than) particular works. Traditioning – the handing down of the '*traditum*' – is a human activity.

> Tradition, let us say, is the structured transaction of passing on wonts from practised to inexperienced human hands. ... A tradition by definition is a living praxis, a communal habitude, with a recogizable identity carried on similarly, wittingly or not, by a following of independent human subjects.[10]

It is an activity that acts on activities, on behaviours, and on beliefs, as well as on texts and works. The tradition of writing symphonies has been continued not by composers writing the same symphony after one another, but by composers writing new works in a form similar (but not identical) to earlier works. In other words, to understand musical traditions, one must recognize that we tradition not only texts and beliefs that can be expressed as texts but also behaviours and activities that are far less definable and codified, but still eminently conventional, teachable, and traditioned.

Tradition: a working definition

To formulate a working definition of musical tradition: A musical tradition is a set of communal practices, values, beliefs, institutions, and behaviours having to do with the invention, performance and hearing of music, which may or may not have reference to a body of specific works (a canon). These form the '*traditum*' which is learned by each generation from the preceding ones; each generation (and each member thereof) may alter some (but not all?) of the elements. In altering or preserving what has been

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[10]Calvin Seerveld, "Footprints in the snow," *Philosophia Reformata*, 56 (1991):5

received, each generation is responsible to the members of the succeeding generation, who will learn the tradition as preserved or as altered.

Musical traditions are always affected by the rest of life, because the people that receive, live within, and pass along those traditions are whole people. Thus the historian investigating tradition will find apparently non-musical factors quite germane to the matter.

The members of a tradition may be identified by community (however defined), or by their shared practices, norms, aesthetic beliefs, or the like, depending on what criteria seem the most feasible and helpful to the person doing the identifying. Traditions may be defined broadly or narrowly, depending upon many considerations, among them the state of communications existing in the time and place under study (i.e., it would be ludicrous to consider European and American music to be part of the same tradition in the twelth century, and ludicrous not to, at least insofar as the colonists are concerned, in the eighteenth). A major criterion for tracing traditions in retrospect would be the provable or probable existence of connections between groups and individuals, especially educational, inter-generational ones.

Possible relations to Tradition

With that definition of musical tradition in mind, let us turn again to Dahlhaus' articulation of the possible relations to tradition. Historians examining tradition, are in a peculiar position. Because tradition is rooted in the past, it falls within the historian's purview. Because tradition explains continuity among discrete works, tradition is invaluable for the writers of narrative histories. However, to study a thing is to some extent to objectify it, to take distance from it; and to take distance from tradition is no longer to live unconsciously and easily within it. Because tradition belongs to the present and the future as well as the past, and because tradition forms the ground under one's feet as well as the object of one's study, any thoughtful or critical relationship to it is ambiguous.

Reflection on the historian's relationship to tradition brings Dahlhaus to this formulation:

> Historical thought rests on a dichotomy. On the one hand, as memory institutionalized into a science, it represents a form of tradition; on the other, by using a form of objectification that amounts to 'controlled estrangement,' it stands in opposition to unbroken traditionalism (*Foundations*, p. 60).

Dahlhaus recognizes two uses for the term 'historicism.' One sense of historicism is 'practical'; the practice of performing and studying the 'standard repertoire' of historical works to the exclusion of all others. This amounts to the predominance of the old over the new. It is **not** an inevitable result of historical awareness; one could study the past without recreating it, and indeed those who seek to defend the 'museum' approach to music usually turn to anything but the idea of historicism to defend it, preferring rather to ally their 'aesthetic Platonism' with 'naturalness' in music, or with rationalism. In contrast to this 'practical historicism,' which may not recognise itself as historicism (although the term is widely used in this sense in musical literature[11]), attention to the apparent logical conclusion of the historicist premise, or 'theoretical' historicism, leads many[12] to see a gulf between the past and the present, and to believe that the only authentic music for each age is its own. This is the battle cry of the avant-garde,[13] and the central problem for historicism: how is the past related to the present, and what should our attitude towards the past be?

Dahlhaus cites Gadamer as one who recognized and sought to solve this dilemma. He summarizes Gadamer as seeing in tradition "less a well defined aggregate of things surviving into the present ... than a 'process of transmission' in which the contemplator of history 'participates'" (*Foundations* p. 58). By objectifying tradition we do not thereby detach

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[11] For 'historicism' used to mean 'practical interest in and reliance on the past,' see for example Richard Taruskin, "The pastness of the present and the presence of the past," in *Authenticity and Early Music*, ed. Nicholas Kenyon (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1988) pp. 137-207. "... I sometimes wonder if the rage for original instruments has anything to do with historicism at all" (p. 151).

[12] Dahlhaus mentions, for instance, Schleiermacher and Dilthey.

[13] Alexander Goehr sums up the attitudes of the avant-garde neatly: "The avant-garde holds to a simple proposition. Composers should deal with the problems of contemporary life, and struggle to move forward and express what has never been expressed before. They should have the courage to get rid of the past, not only the does and don'ts of traditional pedagogy but even its performing apparatus, as for example the orchestra, if it no longer answers their needs" (*The Listener*, vol. 118 (19 November, 1987): 16).

ourselves from it, according to Gadamer. We should not try to ignore its normative claims, as we cannot escape our own prejudices. Gadamer, in recognising what we mentioned earlier, namely, that the structure of tradition is a process of traditioning, points up the necessity of some sort of relationship to it for each individual, whether that relationship is accepting or antagonistic. 'Historicism,' in Dahlhaus' terms, is simply awareness of our place in the process, the realization that we cannot escape, that even in alienation we are in relation with tradition.

Dahlhaus recognizes, in addition to practical historicism and theoretical historicism, two other possible attitudes towards tradition: traditionalism and conservatism. "...'tradition' ... can refer either to the legacy of the past that has survived into the present or to a conscious assimilation of this legacy" (*Foundations*, p. 64). In the terms of our earlier definition, 'tradition' can refer either to what is handed down or to its conscious transmission and acceptance.

Traditionalism is the unconscious assimilation of this legacy, and is presumably no longer possible in our historically conscious society. A sure sign of unbroken tradition, according to Dahlhaus, is the appeal to "established truths." As mentioned above, tradition is not oriented only to the past, but also to the present and future. Traditionalists usually imagine the future as much like the present and past. Traditionalism does not imply restoration, an attempt to revive what has been lost. Rather, tradition (and traditionalism) "presupposes 'seamless continuity'; restoration is an attempt to renew contact with a tradition that has been interrupted or atrophied" (*Foundations*, p. 67). For instance, Bach's music ceased to be played after his death in 1750 and was subsequently revived in the mid-nineteenth century. It was 'ancient music' only one hundred years after it was written. Beethoven's music, which has never passed out of the repertoire, still is not 'ancient,' after a century and a half. In Schiller's terms, restorations are 'sentimental,' not 'naive'; traditionalism is naive.[14]

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[14]Dahlhaus believes that the impulse to restore is always sentimental or nostalgic, though it seems to me that if the restoration is successful and the restored tradition endures, the nostalgic attitude disappears, as is illustrated in the case of Bach's music, which I believe sounds timeless rather than old-fashioned to us now, especially when played on modern electronic instruments.

Tradition is, for the traditionalist, its own vindication; it is accepted, not rationally defended, so that any big change can seem to the traditionalist to be wanton destruction or denial of natural norms. Small changes, on the other hand, can be accepted by the traditionalist with equanimity, and if small changes are not recorded, over time a traditionalist society can change radically without ever becoming aware of it.[15]

Conservatism is for Dahlhaus the conscious effort to preserve and retain the legacy of tradition. It seeks to preserve still existing traditions in a self-reflective way. Conservatism always, according to Dahlhaus, allows the letter of tradition to change in order to preserve its spirit, seeing changes as varying manifestations of an eternal substance, and distinguishing central, inviolable principles from peripheral ones. But almost inevitably, for Dahlhaus,

> Conservatism turns into historicism the moment the survival into the present of things past is subjected to scrutiny, and the scrutiny leads to a conviction or feeling that past things form an essential part of the present precisely in being from the past, and not because of some substance within them that has withstood all change (*Foundations,* p. 70).

This is 'practical' historicism: a veneration of works from the past that is fully aware of their historicity.

> Awareness of the past is not incompatible with aesthetic presence; on the contrary, it can be a component part of that presence. The historicist firmly believes that what a work has to say about the age in which it was written belongs at one and the same time to the past and the present, **not because works are 'timeless' but because past and present form an indissoluble alloy.** The past is what has survived from the past, and hence is part and parcel of the present (*Foundations,* p. 70, my emphasis).

That the past and present form an indissoluble alloy is what the avant-garde, representing an extreme form of theoretical historicism, does not see. On this point of indissolubility the two musical historicisms differ. The practical historicist "enjoys past things for being past," that is, sees

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[15]Goehr seems to concur in this view when he says "The history of music is one of continuous adaptation, made unhesitatingly if and where required, without regret for the past. The preserving of tradition only becomes an issue when it is threatened ...." (*The Listener,* vol. 118 (3 December 1987): 25)

age itself as an aesthetic quality. Art is seen to bear the stamp of history, and the panorama of history is viewed aesthetically.

If practical historicism involves aestheticizing the historical, theoretical historicism historicizes the aesthetic, through theoretical historicism's attitude of tradition critique. It is tradition that hands down not only works but also beliefs and aesthetic norms, as was mentioned above. The realization that tradition is mutable includes the realization that aesthetic norms **have** changed and therefore can **be** changed, and are therefore thoroughly historical. The theoretical historicist sees the mutability of every aesthetic norm and convention; thus historicizing what was once believed to be a-historical, namely, aesthetic criteria.

The distinction between art as art and art as document is not so sharp as it seems; neither is the distinction between practical and theoretical historicism as sharp in reality as it might be theoretically. Both attitudes arose out of the same currents in history; both objectify the work of art and remove it from its functional connections. It is possible for one person, like Dahlhaus, to hold moderate versions of both views, appreciating the aesthetic value of historical music, while acknowledging the mutability and historicity of the aesthetic. So "aestheticizing the historical and historicizing the aesthetic are opposite sides of the same coin" (*Foundations*, p. 71).[16]

Historicism in music is not challenging or important because it suggests that music has changed over the years and is likely to do so in the future. Historicism is challenging and important because it suggests that **we** have changed – that we do not hear and evaluate music in the same way our ancestors did. Practical historicism taken to the extreme of favouring

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[16]The real gulf, according to Dahlhaus, lies between conservatism that still regards values as immutable and avant-garde historicism: "Modern revolutionaries differ from rebels of earlier centuries in that they are 'historicists': they consider history 'producible' and proceed from the premise that religion, culture and the state — Jacob Burkhardt's 'three potencies' — are 'historical through and through' to the conclusion that the mutability spoken of by historians can also be put into practice. The opposite pole to this revolutionary 'historicism' is the traditionalism of the conservatives, with their devotion to 'established truths,' which are not only held to be true by virtue of being established but are also given the honour of always having been true simply because they happen to apply now" (*Foundations*, p. 8).

the past because it **is** past becomes a form of exoticism.[17] Theoretical historicism sees the gulf between the past and the present, between oneself and tradition, and finds itself without any solid ground. Theoretical historicism, taken to extremes, becomes relativism.

The historicity of aesthetic norms and the dependence of history-writing on aesthetic judgements is one of Dahlhaus' main themes; four books deal with it directly.[18] I will expand on his views on history and aesthetics in the next two chapters. Here I wish only to show that this emphasis on the interdependence of historiography and aesthetics arises naturally out of his historicism. Aesthetic norms are part and parcel of music; what we hear depends on how we listen and what expectations we have. These can be shown to have changed, just as has everything else about music. What was valued in one age is spurned in another. How can we choose between the ages? Our own judgment is shaped by our own time. We have no standpoint outside history from which to judge among the aesthetic criteria of the past, any more than we can appreciate all the music that was valued in the past. To say that aesthetic judgements are **not** thoroughly historical is to make a statement of faith just as much as it is a statement of faith to postulate a goal to history – a thing which Dahlhaus is manifestly unwilling to do.

This refusal to stand outside of history has profound implications for Dahlhaus' historical writing. One must, he insists, seek to understand one's object in its own time, to do justice to it, to understand it. It is unhelpful, for instance, to level charges of epigonism at sixteenth century composers. To do justice to the past, it is necessary to emphasize just how much has changed. And yet, the historian is bound by his or her own inheritance; and the music of the past does belong to the present as art, rather than as document. We value works now for our own reasons, which may be quite different from the reasons for which it was valued in the past. I shall explore the practical implications of these dilemmas in the next chapter.

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[17] A fact noted and expounded on most informatively by Taruskin: "I am convinced that ... the historical hardware has won its wide acceptance and above all its commercial viability precisely by virtue of its novelty, not its antiquity" (op. cit., p. 152).

[18] Namely *Esthetics, Analysis, Idea* and *Foundations.*

Summary

To sum up this chapter: Dahlhaus' historicism is characterized by his beliefs that music is thoroughly historical, and that 'History' is a myth which the historian is free to discard. His historicism is quite similar to that of many earlier writers in his emphasis on mutability. It is quite unlike the historicism of some of his immediate predecessors, notably Adorno and Bloch, in that he does not relate music history to a postulated progress towards an end in history. Historicism poses profound questions about our relationship with what is past, which are clarified in part by reflection on the nature of tradition (the presence of the past) and our relationship to it. In particular, the understanding of historicist attitudes provides insight into the dual crisis in modern art music of practical historicism (museum culture) and of the avant-garde. According to Dahlhaus, historicism provides the best avenue for coming to understand our musical heritage. Nevertheless, his refusal of History poses problems for the writing of music history, which appears as a confusion of processes without subject or goal, lacking connections between the universal and the individual, and between individuals – problems which Dahlhaus labours mightily to overcome.

Chapter 2

HISTORIOGRAPHY

Dahlhaus thought long and deeply about the doing (writing) of music history. He kept abreast of contemporary debates in historiography, and this is reflected in his comments about, for instance, reception history, and structural history. I will examine his ideas about historiography in order to understand how these ideas are affected by his historicism, and the resultant 'aestheticization' of his historiography To do this, I turn primarily to *Foundations of Music History*, which concerns itself explicitly and in detail with the possibilities and pitfalls of writing music history. I will look also at those historical studies which have been translated, to see how Dahlhaus' ideas manifest themselves in practice. First, though, I will examine Dahlhaus' reaction to his philosophical and historiographic predecessors.

Some shadows cast by the past

I will note briefly here Dahlhaus' position as regards some historiographic methods favored by his predecessors. Though he is repeatedly, and not without reason, called a 'dialectical' writer, he steadfastly refuses to apply the kind of 'dialectic' that understands history as a see-sawing between types of periods, like the Apollonian and the Dionysian, or the Classical and the Baroque. He also rejects the 'great men' approach, though he attributes some validity to that method for writing the history of the nineteenth century, which understood history in that way. The cult of genius must, according to Dahlhaus, be taken seriously in the age which invented it (*Foundations*, p. 77f.), when a composer's life could be almost as self-conscious a work of art as his music – although, curiously, biography is conspicuous by its absence in Dahlhaus' own *Nineteenth-Century Music*. Also unacceptable to Dahlhaus is the 'progressive model'

which understood music as continually developing and improving, and its pessimistic mirror-image, the 'classicist' view that music developed to a certain point (usually the death of Mozart or Beethoven) and has been in decline ever since. Indeed, Dahlhaus is suspicious of any framework which depends on analogy with organisms, whether the analogy is between music and species that evolve or between periods and organisms that grow, flourish and decay (*Foundations*, pp. 12-18).

A more popular approach at present is to see in music a kind of scientific progress – that is, the successive solving of compositional problems that inevitably arise out of one another. Dahlhaus recognizes that composers do have technical problems to solve, especially in certain intellectual and artistic climates, but he cautions against focussing exclusively on technical problems, pointing out both the profound differences between art and the sciences, particularly as regards what might constitute progress, and the essential freedom to decide (the 'freedom to posit axioms') that composers have.[1]

Dahlhaus rejects or qualifies all these methods in favour of an eclectic and context-sensitive approach.

With regard to his theoretic predecessors, Dahlhaus' writing is undeniably Euro-centric, even Germano-centric.

One reason for Dahlhaus' preoccupation with German thought may simply be the intensity of debate within the German-speaking musicological and historiographical world. The split between East and West was far more than a political division, and working in Berlin, Dahlhaus was literally as well as figuratively in the middle of the division.

> Both implicit and explicit through much of his published writing is the goal of reconciling (dare one say dialectically?) a music history so focused on the 'rubble of facts' that it fails to involve itself with the process of concept formation, and the equally pernicious approach that considers the individual work of art little more than the manifestation of concepts.[2]

According to Gossett, it was in order to bridge this gap between Marxian and positivistic musicology that Dahlhaus turned to Max Weber's 'Ideal Type' as a

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[1] See "Progress and the avant-garde," in *Schoenberg*, pp.14-22.

[2] Phillip Gossett, "Carl Dahlhaus and the 'Ideal Type'", *19th Century Music*, Vol XIII no. 1 (Summer 1989), p. 49.

method. He turned to that and to other methods, seeking historical coherence without ideology. It is important to note the conflict. Dahlhaus spends a great deal of time arguing against Marxist concepts, in sophisticated as well as 'vulgar' forms, a fact which can be disconcerting to the Western – or more specifically, American – reader, who may well be unfamiliar with the other side of the conversation. It takes time for such a reader to realize that it is Marxist historiography that causes Dahlhaus to spend so much time on the problems inherent in treating works of music as social documents. Yet, as Gossett points out, fully as much time is spent by Dahlhaus trying to salvage history from the 'rubble of facts' (or mountain of monographs?) characteristic of Western musicology. Having rejected the Marxist economic framework as essentially irrelevant to music, he tries to find ways to reconstruct the edifice of history from the rubble of the past without leaving out too many important bits – and finds the task ultimately impossible.

Having sketched Dahlhaus' relation to some contemporary academic debates, I will point out some of the traces left on his work by his philosophical predecessors, some of whom, like Kant and Hegel, cast long shadows indeed. (To avoid repetition, I will mention here writers who have influenced Dahlhaus' thinking on aesthetics as well as historiography.) Music and philosophy have had a long and fruitful relationship in German writing, and many authors have had a noticeable influence on Dahlhaus' thought and writing. In tracing these shadows, it will be noticed that though Dahlhaus' *Esthetics*, the most philosophical of his books, is not systematic or 'analytic,' it does not lack in analysis or analytical bite. He is swift to point out internal flaws and inconsistencies in the systems he examines.

Dahlhaus is very aware of Kant's influence on subsequent musical thinking. Two ideas in particular that have had a lasting effect on composition, as Dahlhaus points out, are that art should seem purposeful without having a purpose, and that artifice should seem natural. Dahlhaus also points out that many erroneously hail Kant as a champion of musical formalism when he clearly was not, and also that Kant's own conception of

mathematical musical form (which was limited to ideas of the mathematical relations of vibrations inherited from Pythagoras) could have been considerably enlarged by being related to Kant's own conception of time.

> And it would not have been impossible — or rather, it was an obvious thing to do — to develop from this conception of time an esthetics of music that would do justice to Kant's purpose of clearly distinguishing beauty from mere agreeableness. ... the temporal proportioning of simple and complex sensations of tone ... is an object of universally valid judgment unsupported by concepts; thus it fulfills the conditions that Kant requires for esthetic judgments about beauty and ugliness. While the 'mathematical form' of intervals may be only latent, that of rhythms is manifest. Kant's music esthetics suffers from too narrow an idea of the function of time in music. He conceived this art as merely 'transitory,' always passing away, instead of recognizing that events in time can also be fixed in forms (*Gestalten*) (*Esthetics*, pp. 33-34).

Again, in his treatment of Schopenhauer, Dahlhaus moves beyond exposition into critique.

> The difference between concepts and ideas, Schopenhauer believes, must become manifest in the difference between the experiences whereby they become accessible or comprehensible. But ... a sceptical question is readily posed: whether the 'pure recognition' of the idea of weight may not be founded, contrary to Schopenhauer's dogma, on commerce with weighty objects. What is displayed to esthetic contemplation is something ultimate, derived, rather than something primordial, fundamental; rather superstructure than substructure. The claim that it is original and immediate, not possible to trace from previously achieved formations of abstract concepts, is questionable. One can hardly repress a suspicion that the ideas whose survival Schopenhauer would like to insure through esthetics are nothing other than concepts, transfigured, shining in the light of devotional contemplation. The 'work of the concept' (Hegel) is laid aside, so to speak. The mind's spontaneity, its category-forming activity, which Kant discovered through the objects of consciousness that appear to be data from the external world, freezes in the gaze of esthetics to a mere correlation, a static condition in which 'idea' and 'pure recognition,' according to Schopenhauer's formulation, are fitted to each other. But this esthetic 'rescue' of ideas is precarious and threatened: the realm of esthetics is a realm of appearance and even ideas sink to this realm if they are entrusted entirely to esthetic contemplation (*Esthetics*, pp. 45-46).

Here the critique is not so much internal as external; Dahlhaus records what Schopenhauer thought about music but he also takes pains to show it to be an untenable thought. Aesthetics may record the range of historical attitudes about music, but Dahlhaus is enough of a philosopher to point out

why he thinks some ideas are disqualified from the range of possible opinions to be held by us now.

The vehemence of Dahlhaus' rejection of Schopenhauer's system comes partly, I suspect, from Dahlhaus' dislike of metaphysics. Schopenhauer's philosophy of art is thus, to Dahlhaus, no more than "an attempt to 'rescue' Platonism, the phantasmagoria of a 'world behind the world' ... on a route (or detour) to this rescue he encounters esthetics" (*Esthetics*, p. 45). Dahlhaus does not, by the way, underestimate the historical importance of musical metaphysics; he underscores the importance of Schopenhauer to Wagner's developing aesthetic,[3] among others. But it is not a belief he finds congenial, in Schopenhauer or anyone else.

Hegel left clearer traces on Dahlhaus' writing than Schopenhauer, and in this one case no hint of irritation at 'metaphysics' shows through. Dahlhaus' style of writing owes a great deal to the dialectical traditions stemming from Hegel, transmitted through generations of German academic writing as well as through Hegel's actual philosophy. But Dahlhaus has little faith in ultimate syntheses, and often leaves antitheses unresolved. *Geistesgeschichte* is dead, Dahlhaus announces, but he would like to salvage some of its more useful appurtenances, like the idea that periods and period labels deserve careful consideration. As far as aesthetic ideas are concerned, Dahlhaus affirms that Hegel went against the historical trend by disparaging absolute (purely instrumental) music as ultimately empty – but in a moment of doubt he wonders if Hegel wasn't right, after all:

> ...to claim that Hegel's prognosis for music has been disproved by subsequent history would be exaggerating. 'Art's cultural function,' as it is called by Helmut Kühn, has indeed weakened (*Esthetics*, p.49).

The call for Art to have a cultural function is not uncommon in the musical philosophizing of the last century or so: Marxism, of course, insists on it, and the greatest Marxist figures for musical aesthetics are Adorno and Bloch. Adorno said that, intentionally or no, music must show forth the vacuity of this age, either by acting as a mirror to the mechanical ugliness, as he thought Schoenberg's serialism did, or by being itself vacuous, like

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[3]See for instance "The Twofold Truth in Wagner's Aesthetics" in *Between*, pp. 19-39.

popular music – and Stravinsky.[4] The spectre of Adorno haunts Dahlhaus because he set the tone for most subsequent Schoenberg interpretation. Dahlhaus challenges Adorno's interpretation that Schoenberg's experiments in atonality were historically necessary, most notably in an essay entitled "Schoenberg's aesthetic theology"[5] where he argues for Schoenberg's historical freedom of choice, and demonstrates that Schoenberg had reasons beside the 'tendency of the material' for what he did. Schoenberg interpretation aside, Adorno provided Dahlhaus with a slogan for his 'historicist' attitude towards music: "music is historical through and through" as mentioned earlier. For Dahlhaus, Adorno exemplified a whole complex of ideas about music, history and the avant-garde, and many of the essays in *Schoenberg* are an attempt to come to terms with those ideas, whether or not Adorno is explicitly mentioned. To Dahlhaus, Adorno's writing is by no means without insight, but Adorno's basic attempt to judge music in social terms is, in Dahlhaus' eyes, wrong-headed from the start.[6] Music and history do not fit the socio-historical strait-jacket Adorno tries to put them in; in fact, Dahlhaus treats Adorno's faith in the power of History in much the same way as he treats Schopenhauer's metaphysics. Dahlhaus is quite happy to pick up phrases from Adorno when they are pithy and insightful. He is perfectly willing to engage Adorno's musical analyses and critiques **as** analyses and critiques, and to point out their strengths and weaknesses. But where the analysis or criticism relies on the 'metaphysical' idea of 'the tendency of the material' or 'History,' Dahlhaus dismisses it out of hand as unwarranted or unfounded. Whether or not 'history' as a force exists[7] it is inadmissible as an explanation or criterion for criticism.

Another important philosopher for many contemporary composers, Ernst Bloch argued that music can, should, and in a few cases does give us a foretaste of Utopia. Here again, when Dahlhaus quotes him, it is with

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[4] See Theodor W. Adorno, *Philosophie der neuen Musik* (Tübingen, 1949, 2nd ed. 1958) translated as *Philosophy of Modern Music,* by Anne G. Mitchell and Wesley V. Blomster (New York: The Seabury Press, 1973).

[5] "*Schönbergs ästhetische Theologie,*" anthologized in English in *Schoenberg,* pp.81-94.

[6] See for instance "The musical work of art as a subject of sociology," *Schoenberg,* pp. 234-247.

[7] A question Dahlhaus avoids debating directly, preferring to note that it is an unfashionable idea at the moment, as for instance *Realism* p. 1 and *Foundations* p. 52.

respect, but with concern to distance himself from a unitary vision of history.

Nietzsche is a figure who is difficult for musicians to escape – especially musicians interested in Wagner. Dahlhaus manages, though, to restrict his discussions of Nietzsche to Wagner for the most part.[8] Nietzsche's importance to music history is appreciated and explored, and the acuteness of his insight, especially as regards Wagner's aesthetics is remarked upon, but little if any of his wider philosophy is ever discussed. Like Schopenhauer, Rousseau, Wackenroder, Tieck and many others, it is very important to Dahlhaus to understand their ideas and their influence, but he does not particularly engage them philosophically, as he does Kant, Hegel, and Ingarden.

Roman Ingarden, a follower and reviser of Husserl, is engaged by Dahlhaus – in fact, he provides Dahlhaus with a working ontological theory of the musical work which allows Dahlhaus both to maintain the central importance of the work concept and to maintain the openness of the work to changing interpretations. I will discuss this ontology in chapter three.

Max Weber is the other obvious contributor to Dahlhaus' general framework. Dahlhaus adopts both the 'Ideal Type' as a historical method and Weber's terminological distinction between 'value-relations' and 'valuations' (both detailed later in this chapter) almost without comment or question.

Those are the shadows that lie most clearly across Dahlhaus' writing. The theoretical shadows, that is. As far as musical influences are concerned, his interest is entirely confined to European music – not even American music gets any attention, with the exception of John Cage. Nor, indeed, does he write about any music from before the 14th century. Fair enough; one must narrow one's field, and what remains is certainly enough to occupy anyone's academic career. Ethnomusicology is after all, rightly or wrongly, considered to be a separate discipline from music history, though musical aesthetics often takes it into consideration these days. Dahlhaus,

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[8]See for example "The Twofold Truth in Wagner's Aesthetics: Nietzche's Fragment 'On Music and Words,'" in *Between*, pp. 19-39.

however, attends almost exclusively to the Germanic tradition, from Bach to Schoenberg. This is not, I believe, the conscious nationalism of an earlier historiography centered on national 'schools' or 'styles' (Dahlhaus' understanding of Nationalism is anything but naive[9]), but rather simply a German paying most attention to the common objects of study of his German academic predecessors.[10] Joseph Kerman suggests another reason for Dahlhaus' preoccupation with Schoenberg and Wagner in particular: that they were problematic figures requiring radical revaluation by German critics after the fall of the Nazis, who had vilified the former and propagandized the latter.[11] As well as Wagner and Schoenberg, Brahms seems to have had a particular fascination for Dahlhaus. I mention this because it was an essay on Brahms that provoked one reviewer to write:

> Professor Dahlhaus' book ... leaves me with the feeling that to him music is material for study rather than a source of delight.[12]

He evidently chose to emphasize something other than the critic's favourite aspect of Brahms piano music. I disagree. I think Dahlhaus' writing betrays a deep and abiding love for music that fueled his desire to make clear just what it is that we value so in the 'canon,' shown by his insistence that music is present with us as art as well as historical artifact.

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[9]Cf. his essay on 'Nationalism and Music' in *Between.*

[10]There are some exceptions to this German focus. Most of the essays that make up *Realism* are about non-German composers (Wagner and Mahler are the only exceptions). *Nineteenth-Century Music* appears to be a conscious attempt to widen the focus and do justice to the non-German currents in the period's musical life, notably Italian Opera, Russian music, and the various nationalist movements. In this he is not entirely successful. For one thing, almost all the social and political references are German, and he uses these in part to mark important subdivisions in the period (which is not entirely concurrent with the calender's century), and he largely ignores French music, with the curious exception of Offenbach. His account of the move to modernism is particularly biased in favour of the Strauss-Mahler-Schoenberg succession and against the Debussy-Stravinsky developments. Debussy and Stravinsky are mentioned, but only *Pelléas et Mélisande* is treated with any detail of Debussy's works; Stravinsky gets four lines in the index, while Schoenberg gets twenty. So, while the problems of English reviewers with Dahlhaus' Germanness is often a conflict of agendas, it is also undeniably due also to a real bias in his writing.

[11]Joseph Kerman, "Recollections: Carl Dahlhaus, 1928-1989," *19th Century Music,* XIII no. 1 (Summer 1989), p. 57-8.

[12]Henry Raynor, review of *Between, Music Review* 45 (1984): 72-3.

Issues in Music Historiography

Dahlhaus takes considerable pains to defend his profession against the charge of irrelevance. Music history and musical aesthetics, he says, are not done in a vacuum. They affect, and are affected by, musical life in general. Music history affects the musical understanding and criticism of works which, belonging to the past, form the bulk of our present musical experience. Some music historical judgements, especially those regarding which works are important to history, depend on aesthetic judgements. Conversely, some aesthetic criteria, like originality, rely on historical knowledge. Both music history and musical aesthetics are, for Dahlhaus, focussed primarily on the musical work of art. For this reason he expresses the desire to unite music history and musical aesthetics, a desire which is ultimately frustrated, as I will show.

Music history has a variety of roles to play in musical life, among them supplier – or exploder – of anecdotes, interpreter of meaning, and source of critical editions.[13] Music history serves as both memory and commentary; thus its relationship with tradition is ambiguous, for on the one hand it is part of the preservation of the past-to-be-handed-down, and on the other, by increasing historical awareness, music history militates against uncritical acceptance of what has been handed down.

It will be seen that the over-riding impression one gains of Dahlhaus as a historian is of one concerned to do justice to the complexity of the historian's task. He is very concerned not to over-simplify or over-generalize. His complaint about the approaches he criticizes is that they do just that.

It is sometimes said that historians have to do with change and continuity. Dahlhaus sees in change and continuity both antithesis and paradox:

> The concept of the 'new' ... is, taken as a historical category, as unavoidable as it is precarious. It is unavoidable in the trivial sense that the matter of history is that which changes, and not that which is static or that which repeats itself in the same form. It is precarious because the principle which states that history is to be

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[13]A task for which English-speaking music historians have shown particular enthusiasm, as Kerman shows. According to him, the reader of a 1963 overview of work in musicology "could hardly have been blamed for concluding that the main work of musicology consisted of bringing out editions — mostly of Renaissance music" (*Musicology*, p. 42).

> understood as continuity urges the historian to trace the new, it at all possible, back to the old. To be precise, a historical explanation reveals the new only inasmuch as it is not new. The new is not significant in itself, but solely in relation to its antithesis, as the irreducible and unresolved remainder. Thus the new can be seen, paradoxically, as being at one and the same time the actual subject matter and the blind spot of history (*Foundations*, p. 2).

Dahlhaus generally seems so overwhelmed with the degree of change present in music that he has to search high and low for continuity. Most of *Foundations* can be seen as an examination of the possibilities and pitfalls of pursuing various kinds of continuity.

One reason continuity becomes a problem for Dahlhaus lies in the first facet of his historicism: his understanding that music is 'historical through and through.' It would simplify the historian's (and the critic's) job tremendously if music had, as nineteenth century thinkers thought it had, natural laws of harmony, melody, rhythm, and so forth. Progress could then be measured and merit assigned to works and periods when music best exemplified, or made best use of, those natural laws. A natural law for music would, in fact, provide a basis for the union of aesthetic and historical judgement after which Dahlhaus yearns. But, if music is thoroughly human, if our understanding of music, like language, is based entirely on convention, then music is completely historical, and that means that it both results from myriad influences in the past (giving the historian the job of tracing and ranking in importance those influences) and open to change in the future.

The complexity of the historical task is already evident with the historian. Objectivity is, in a way, another myth, an unattainable ideal, according to Dahlhaus. Everyone has values and beliefs that deeply affect the work that is done.

> ... an historian's need to rely on subjective judgments stands in direct proportion to the degree of objectivity he seeks in his history. However dispassionately and impartially he tries to reconstruct 'the way it really was,' he is nonetheless compelled to distinguish between essential things that 'belong to history' and inessential things that can be safely disregarded. And he does this on the basis of criteria which are thoroughly subjective, being rooted in his own background and social position, in his beliefs and experiences (*Foundations*, p. 85).

For the music historian, the choice of what is and is not worthy of consideration is conditioned by the standard repertoire, the pre-existing 'canon' of 'great' musical works that make up the majority of what is played,

heard and studied in the world of 'classical' music. Within this framework, the historian's own preferences will affect which works he or she deems more significant. Human limitations are a factor too; no-one can sift all the potentially relevant data. Dahlhaus comments that one helpful response to the problem of subjectivity is an ongoing process of reflection (as suggested by Jürgen Habermas[14]). "Historians can keep the problem at bay, as it were, by probing it with ever growing refinement" (*Foundations*, p. 86), probing which leads to an understanding of the sources of prejudice and preference. "Yet it does not follow that any pronouncement on history can be reduced completely and utterly to an underlying dogma riddled with particular interests."

> Reconstructing the conditions under which a proposition came into being will never suffice to establish whether or not it is valid. And an historical study based on apparently questionable value-relations — for instance a history of nineteenth-century music that takes the idea of nationalism as a criterion for separating the essential from the inessential — can nevertheless achieve insights that are 'objective' to the extent that they are sufficiently in accord, firstly, with the material whose internal cohesion is meant to be reconstructed and, secondly, with the current state of knowledge that the study is meant to build on (*Foundations*, p. 87).

In other words, the criteria for the validity of historical observations is not the motivation for those observations, though it may be important or enlightening to note them, but whether or not the conclusions make sense in light of the object of study – do they help us make sense of the music? – and whether they build on or ignore the body of scholarship already present.

What one examines will be affected by what one expects to be important: so one historian will begin with an analysis of particular works and choose a particular method for that analysis, another will focus on the composer's biography, a third will consider the social conditions surrounding the commission, composition, and performance of the works, and so on. They may all come to valid, important conclusions. What they conclude will depend on the premisses from which they began; but Dahlhaus affirms that potentially they may all reach valid conclusions. So the histories tell us much that is important about the music; and at the same time they tell us as much, if not more, about the historian.

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[14]Cf. *Foundations*, p. 86. The bibliography mentions *Erkenntnis und Interesse* (Frankfurt am Main, 1968) and *Zur Logik der Sozialwissenshaften* (Tübingen, 1967).

Among those things the historian must reflect on are facts themselves. Facts do not present themselves to the historian as facts; rather, according to Dahlhaus, facts are essentially fabricated by the historian for his own perfectly reasonable purposes from the available evidence. Facts have

> ...been selected on the basis of particular interests, and have risen from the status of mere source material to that of historical fact solely by virtue of a conceptual system of the historian's own making (*Foundations*, p. 42).

Hence what 'belongs to history' in the sense of being important facts for which the historian must account depends largely upon the historian and his or her interests – among which is his or her interest in being professionally respectable, so that, practically, there is a body of facts which remains reasonably well established and stable. This includes the body of works known as the 'standard repertoire.'

What is acceptable as a written history is also determined by the kinds of beliefs historians of a given era have about the world and how the world is structured. For example, in the nineteenth century, continuity in histories was provided by a presumed idea or force that was understood to shape, or at least to link events; the most popular of these was the evolutionary presupposition, which had, in music history, the effect of elevating the nineteenth century principle that novelty and innovation were 'Good Things' (a principle which itself rested on an evolutionary notion of 'progress') into a presumed basic historical force. In other words, what belonged to history' was what was novel at the time. This assumption, according to Dahlhaus, may distort our understanding of musical life in periods with different aesthetic assumptions, such as the middle ages, when an innovative work might have been considered less important than a 'traditional work.' This is not to say that documentable change did not occur in the middle ages, but rather that at the time continuity was valued over change, and that to write a history which honours the self-understanding of a period of "unbroken traditionalism to whom the present was no more than a repetition of the past" (*Foundations*, p. 13) might be difficult in a nineteenth-century narrative form. And Dahlhaus implies that it is vital to honour the self-understanding of each period.

The musical tradition has changed over the centuries, and music historiography can discover how – if it is careful. Dahlhaus notes that there have been various views over the centuries on what in music is primary. In the sixteenth and early seventeenth centuries music was understood in terms of its occasion, and each occasion had its proper genre – that is to say, music was governed by a notion of decorum. In the later seventeenth and early eighteenth centuries music was supposed to represent objective emotional states or 'affects.' In the later eighteenth and nineteenth centuries music was believed to be a personal expression. And in the twentieth century music is primarily understood structurally, as a form that is its own content.

> Explanation, explication, understanding, analysis: explaining a word on the basis of the norms of the genre it represents; explicating the material content embodied in the work; understanding the composer behind the work, and analysing the connections that bind the various parts of a work into a text (*Foundations*, p. 77).

These are the approaches suited to each time, according to Dahlhaus. They can be applied to other periods, as each norm appears in a subsidiary aesthetic role in each subsequent period – Dahlhaus does not mention whether or not the norms appear at all in previous periods. But the method arising out of the period's own understanding is likely to prove the most enlightening for that period's own music. So, for instance, the doctrine and methods of *Verstehen* (seeking understanding of a composer in order to understand his music) is, according to Dahlhaus, best reserved for the nineteenth century.

Still, according to Dahlhaus, distinguishing the values and beliefs held by past generations from one's own is not a simple or obvious task. Max Weber[15] distinguished valuation, the norms held by the historian, from value-relations, which are the norms discovered in or attributed to a period by the historian. (The examples given in the preceeding paragraph of values held in different periods are examples of value-relations.) The problem with this distinction is that most value-relations are 'produced' and imputed to the past by the historian, not found there. 'Facts' are very

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[15] *Die rationalen und soziologischen Grundlagen der Musik* (Munich, 1921) and *Gesammelte Aufsätze zur Wissenshaftslehre* (Tübingen, 1958) are the books mentioned in Dahlhaus' bibliography.

accommodating, and what one 'finds' and what one believes are seldom very different, while facts and value-relations are often inter-dependent. Still, moral and aesthetic judgements are not beyond rational discussion; nor are they impervious to empirical reality; Dahlhaus' relativity is limited by his belief in empirical reality. The evaluation of the received tradition is complicated.

> The 'Value-relations' discovered by an historian in the music and musical culture of earlier periods and the 'valuations' that he himself is disposed to make have always been transmitted side by side as part of tradition, the survival of the past in the present. We never make completely unpreconceived judgments in an immediate and primary relationship to an object, but are always assimilating or reflecting received opinion, whether consciously or unconsciously ... judgments are made with reference less to actual things than to earlier judgments (*Foundations*, p. 91-2).

The music historian has reference to more than the historiographical tradition, for he or she is also bound by the musical tradition: the canon of works conceded to be of great aesthetic importance. The historian's task is to some degree set by this canon, for these are the works seen as worth investigating, as significant. Aesthetic significance gives them historical prominence.[16] The music historian is thus dependent on two traditions: the historiographical and the musical, and these two are in some ways inextricable.

Historiographic Methods

The desire to write a history which displays continuity without distorting music history's complexity leads Dahlhaus to meditate at some length on the loss of faith in the possibilities of narrative forms in "Does music history have a subject?" which forms chapter 4 of *Foundations*. The problem with narrative forms is simply that they have always required a protagonist, a subject whose story can be told. Hegel cast in the role of this subject the *Weltgeist*, or 'world spirit' which acts in history. This

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[16] "History's philosopher critics see the historian as inextricably entangled in a dialectical process of having to make value-decisions on an utterly subjective basis so as to turn a chaos of facts into narrative history ... yet these critics base their reflections on a view of the historian's craft that is gravely suspect.

Music history deals with a canon of musical works which historians concede as 'belonging to history' ... in the strong sense of towering above the debris otherwise left behind ... This 'History' ... is a distillation of that part of tradition which the present considers relevant or essential to itself ..." (*Foundations*, p. 92).

thesis Dahlhaus; along with most modern historians, rejects out of hand. What can take its place? Dahlhaus has several suggestions. Traditions, especially traditions of genres, can be traced through time and used to string together a history. The difficulty with tradition, as was mentioned earlier, as the object of the historian's inquiry is that the historian is also the inheritor of tradition. He or she cannot stand entirely outside tradition.

There is another possible solution to the challenge of narrative which Dahlhaus suggests: examine the assumptions we have about narratives. The requirement that narrative have a singular subject is rooted in narrative practice that is essentially that of the nineteenth century. Narrative practices in fiction have changed; why not in history as well? Why not take Joyce as a model, and simply accept that, in accord with the way we now understand the world, narratives can be disjunctive.[17] Here aesthetics, in the guise of poetics, enters into history on an unexpected level.

Notwithstanding the possibility for complex narrative forms to handle complex material, Dahlhaus continues in *Foundations* to enumerate the sources of continuity in music history. One of the most basic and important of these is the musical work. "The concept 'work,' and not 'event,' is the cornerstone of music history" (*Foundations*, p. 4). This is an aesthetic as much as a methodological fact; the musical works of the past exist in the present as aesthetic objects, rather than as documents. One of the tasks of the historian is to provide information that can assist the listener to understand the products of an alien age. The work has the advantage for the

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[17] "Now if ... the continuity of a history is not always tied to the identity of the subject of an historical narrative ... then we might even go so far as to ask whether continuity is a necessary prerequisite for historical narration at all. Siegfried Kracauer [*Geschichte - Vor den letzten Dingen*, p. 171] and Hans Robert Jauss, ['Geschichte der Kunst und Historie', p. 192] for instance, have shown that the nineteenth-century historian's notion of continuity was related in substance to that of contemporary novelists - or, to put it drastically, that Ranke took his narrative technique from Scott - and conversely that the sense of form and reality at the heart of the modern novel ever since Proust and Joyce might very well be influencing the manner in which historians combine their facts and hypotheses, thereby bringing historians closer to a modern awareness as to what reality actually is and how it can be captured in language. In other words, granted that the forms and structures of the novel are vehicles for voicing fragments of reality previously condemned to silence, it follows that there is no reason why an historian should adopt a scholarly pose bordering dangerously close on provincialism and shun modern narrative techniques on principle, preferring instead to cling to tried and true methods which, however artless and blandly descriptive they may appear to the naive reader, are in fact as much beholden to formal artifice as are modern procedures, the only difference being that their artifices are older" (*Foundations*, p. 47).

historian that it endures through time, thanks to its physical basis as a score; it has an origin and a subsequent history, which can be documented. To the seeker after continuity, though, a history of works has the drawback that works are discreet objects, difficult to relate to one another. Traditions of genre provide some connections between works, but as the nineteenth and twentieth centuries have progressed, works have become increasingly unrelated to genres. The text of a work, the score, is an ideal object for critical investigation and analysis.

Analysis is for Dahlhaus a crucial starting point. It is important to understand the object under investigation. However, analysis is not a neutral undertaking; different methods of analysis arise from different aesthetic assumptions about what is important in music. For instance, an analysis based on the premise that harmony is the most basic feature of music will produce quite a different picture of the work than one which takes as its basis polyphony. Textual criticism is also important here; it is helpful to establish just what the composer did and did not write. Dahlhaus suggests that this is particularly important for works from the eighteenth through the twentieth centuries, when originality was (is) an important aesthetic value (*Foundations* p. 165). The historian may also find inauthentic texts important to his history, however, as evidence of how later generations understood a work.

The investigation of the 'afterlife' of the work is called 'reception history' and includes the investigation of how the work's interpretation and reception by audiences has changed. Reception history has some serious practical difficulties to overcome, however, as well as aesthetic difficulties discussed in the next chapter. The sheer lack of records of what members of historical audiences thought of a work is a major problem. We have only the opinions of professional critics and of those persons who both happened to record their ideas in letters or diaries and whose jottings have been preserved – not necessarily a statistically significant portion of the musical population. Dahlhaus suggests that more helpful avenues of investigation would include investigation into the rise of the musical canon, by tracing the frequency of performance of works in the repertoire, or the investigation of the changing attitudes and status of professional critics and journals containing criticism, or of the changing meaning of clichés connected with major composers. All of these could be investigated from

the existing journalistic evidence, at least insofar as the nineteenth century is concerned (*Foundations* pp.150-165).

Dahlhaus' own favourite hunting ground for connections among works is not reception history, but the history of ideas. He writes that, at least for the vast area of European music history affected by Burckhardt's dictum that the 'three potencies' of history are religion, culture and the state, the history of ideas approach has great promise. Dahlhaus does not write very much about the history of ideas approach in *Foundations*, but he actively pursues it, most notably in *Realism* and *Idea*. Both books exhibit a kind of continuous narrative. In *Realism* the narrative form resembles that of a mystery story, as we go in search of the true identity of the mysterious entity 'realism.' *Idea* is more reminiscent of Apuleis' *The Golden Ass*, as the idea of absolute music and the term 'absolute music' go through separate changes throughout the eighteenth, nineteenth and early twentieth centuries. In both books, the investigation ventures outside the bounds of music history to engage broader literary, artistic and intellectual histories. Dahlhaus defends his approach at the start of *Realism*,

> ...rather than remain in an inconclusive state where, to put it bluntly, philosophical nominalism is misused to excuse terminological slovenliness, it might be possible and by no means futile to take up a debate broken off when Geistesgeschichte was renounced, and to demonstrate in justification that it can still be conducted — with altered premisses and having got rid of the awkward Zeitgeist hypothesis. 'Realism is not a bad subject for an investigation of the advantages and disadvantages of stylistic concepts which have their foundations in the history of ideas (Ideengeschichte)... (*Realism*, p. 1).

In this book, the pursuit involves disentangling the common uses of the term (especially by Marxists[18]) from the meaning it had for those working in the period it is applied to, the late nineteenth century; constructing an 'Ideal Type' of the realist musical work; and demonstrating how this 'type' does and does not fit the works actually produced. Connections are noted between 'realism' in literature and aesthetics (the aesthetics of the true as

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[18]'Realism' or 'Social Realism' became the watchword of Marxist aesthetics after being endorsed by Engels and by Lenin. Dahlhaus details how subsequent interpretations of their ideas have been inventive: bureaucrats used realism as a criteria to dismiss any art they didn't like, especially if is depicted a reality they wished to hide; Brecht and Eisler developed such a flexible definition that it could mean whatever was politic at the moment; similarly Lukács' theory became so universal as to explain anything; and Adorno's idea of 'abstract mirroring' managed to include those very symbolic elements Lenin tried to bann. None of these 'realisms,' according to Dahlhaus, is of much help in reconstructing the ideas of the nineteenth century (*Realism*, pp. 2-10).

opposed to the aesthetics of beauty), where it was a common and recognized attitude, and 'realism' in music, where it was nearly non-existent. The connections Dahlhaus makes are quite specific; in the case of each composer examined, he notes who they were reading, and how they came to be influenced by realism, and what they themselves said on the topic, if anything.

Dahlhaus defends the value of the history of ideas approach in *Idea:*

> What may seem obvious today, as though indicated in the nature of the thing — that music is a sounding phenomenon and nothing more, that a text is therefore considered an "extramusical" impetus — proves to be a historically molded theorem no more than two centuries old. Understanding the historical character of the idea serves two purposes: first, to prepare for the insight that what has come about historically can also be changed again; second, to understand more precisely the nature of today's predominant conception of music by becoming aware of its origins, i.e., the assumptions that underlie it, and of the background against which it sets itself off (*Idea,* p. 8).

Hence the history of ideas approach reinforces Dahlhaus' basic historicism. Here he investigates the antecedents of an aesthetic paradigm, a basic aesthetic attitude that is tremendously important at present. He shows how the same term does not always signify the same idea, as for some, 'absolute music' meant simply 'instrumental music, devoid of any programme,' while for others it meant 'music which provides intimations of the Absolute,' and how the same idea can be expressed in different ways – the defense of instrumental music as aesthetically significant in its own right significantly predates the invention of the term 'absolute music.' The idea of absolute music became important for aesthetic as well as for other reasons; it rose to prominence and widespread acceptance due to the aesthetic excellence of the music associated with it. Again, Dahlhaus demonstrates the historical importance of the interaction of music aesthetics with literature and poetics; some of the most important formulations of the idea came from fiction (for example, Wackenroder's *Outpourings of the Heart of an Art-Loving Friar* and *Fantasies on Art*[19]), and the closest parallel to the idea lies in Mallarmé's poetics.[20]

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[19]These appeared in 1797 and 1799 respectively; they can be found, in German, in Wilhelm Heinrich Wackenroder, *Werke und Briefe,* ed Friedrich von der Leyen (Berlin, 1938; reprint, Hildesheim, 1967). A selection from *Herzensergiessungen eines kunstliebenden Klosterbruders (Outpourings of the Heart of an Art-Loving Friar,)* is given in English under the title "The

Another of Dahlhaus' favourite approaches to music history is that of 'structural history' stemming from the work of the contributors to the magazine *Annales*.[21] It is an approach that is congenial to modern ideas, for it avoids the three common unwarranted assumptions of music history: first, that outstanding composers 'make' music history; second, that genres evolve like organisms; and third, that this evolution expresses a 'national' spirit. The basic idea of structural history is to focus on frames of reference for actions, rather than on causes. Structures can be things like widespread ideas and beliefs, patterns of behaviour, economic conditions, educational institutions, and social institutions. A structural approach might tend to alter music history's dependence on the work in favour of the event, for structures are manifest in events, and events are sustained by structures, but the structures of society and culture are needed to explain the reception of the work.

'Structural history' appears oxymoronic, for structures are usually defined as that which does not change, and history is the tracing of change. But structures do change, slowly, and it is necessary to understand them as the background for events, as the usual against which the unusual is measured. Structures interact with each other, and as they come into and out of existence the circumstances of music constantly alter. Structural history can theoretically start with anything and bring out a whole constellation of inter-related circumstances that affect what was happening at any given time. Dahlhaus gives as an example the structures connected with the idea of musical autonomy in the late nineteenth century.

> Suppose we wanted, by way of example, to sketch the categorical framework of a music culture, say that of Central Europe in the nineteenth century, excluding opera. We can choose our starting point at random, firstly because any point in

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Remarkable Musical Life of the Musician Joseph Berglinger" in Oliver Strunk, *Source Readings in Music History: The Romantic Era* (New York: W. W. Norton & co, 1950, 1965) pp. 10-23.

[20] Mallarmé's *poesie absolue* resembled the romantic aesthetic of absolute music, according to Dahlhaus (*Idea*, pp. 141-155), in seeking an art that was a world unto itself free of outside references (in Mallarmé's case, this meant a poetry dependent on the sound rather than the meaning of the words), and that eschewed enthusiasm and sentiment in favour of structure. Mallarmé, like Hanslick, sought the essence of art in the 'active' 'inner' form, and like Wackenroder's 'Berglinger' felt that there was a tension between the 'magical' effects of art and the mechanical means of producing these effects. Despite these similarities, there is little evidence for any direct contact between Mallarmé and the formulators of the aesthetics of absolute music.

[21] *Foundations*, p. 137; Dahlhaus' comments on structural history are given at some length in chapter 9 of *Foundations*, pp.129-150.

> the system is reachable from any other, and secondly because a description of connections and correspondences does not *prima facie* say anything about a hierarchy of sub-elements. Therefore, it should not be misconstrued and deplored as an 'idealist' preconception if we start by assuming the principle of aesthetic autonomy, i.e. the right of artificial music to be listened to for its own sake rather than serve a function within an overriding extramusical process ...(*Foundations,* p. 144).

> The aesthetics of genius as an alternative authority of a poetics of music proceeding from norms; the autonomy principle that suppressed or vitiated functionality in music; *Bildung* as a correlate to aesthetic autonomy, the category of musical *Verstehen* with its double burden of retracing musical logic and empathising with the personality and originality of the composer; bourgeois concert life as an institutionalisation of the ideal of autonomy and yet, in radical contrast, as a manifestation of mercantilism in music; the emancipation of instrumental music; the presence of classical works standing beyond the confines of history and forming a fixed repertory in precarious relation to the postulate of innovation and the ideal of progress; the veneration of originality as something to be sought but not emulated; the jeopardising of the traditional musical genres; and lastly the stressing of the 'poetical' and denigration of the 'mechanical' (which was felt to be either self-evident or beneath notice) — all of these took form in the nineteenth century as discrete, complementary, mutually derivative sub-elements of one and the same musical 'circumstance,' as characteristics of a musical culture which, with the chronological licence normally allowed in the construction of ideal types, lends itself to description as a structure of structures (*Foundations* pp. 149-150).

Max Weber's method of the 'Ideal Type' is another favourite method of Dahlhaus' for finding connections among works. It is a method which involves making an heuristic construction for the purpose of comparison among works or other things which may have similarities without all sharing all the attributes of the 'type.' The ideal type is recognized as having no historical existence; its only use being to bring to light connections or similarities which are not otherwise obvious.

> ... a system of correspondences discovered or devised by the historian as a framework for a period of music history can be taken as an 'ideal type' in Max Weber's sense, i. e. it is meant to be not a mirror likeness of empirical fact but rather a proposal in which we willingly put up with a certain imprecision of time and location in the association of the various parts because the resulting increase of intelligibility outweighs the want of empirical completeness (*Foundations,* p. 141).

Dahlhaus goes on to acknowledge that there is always room for argument about whether the empirical grounding of the ideal type, never perfect, is in a specific case adequate to the task, and that there are always loose ends which fail to conform. Dahlhaus uses ideal types for many kinds of things, for instance: the aesthetic postulates of historians (*Foundations* p. 24);

musical forms like sonata form; genres like music drama (*Foundations*, p. 94); and aesthetic premises shared by composers. The last is the kind of investigation Dahlhaus carries out in *Realism*, where the idea of musical realism varies from composer to composer. Dahlhaus constructs an ideal type of 'realism,' which has a variety of attributes, of which each composition examined exhibits some but none exhibits all, and none share exactly the same combination of attributes. Dahlhaus concludes:

> The claim can therefore be made that behind all the divergent tendencies and stylistic divisions of the late nineteenth century an underlying pattern is discernible which makes it possible to relate to one another phenomena which historically have nothing in common, being associated with such contrasted entities as mythological music drama and veristic opera. A latent musico-historical connection thus comes to light between works — *Der Ring des Nibelungen, Carmen, Boris Godunov* — which were written at roughly the same time but possess marked stylistic differences: a connection, be it said, which consists less in the recurrence of a certain constellation of characteristics than in a theoretical model which survives as a structure common to them all even when the separate components are present only selectively; by making the recognition of that connection possible, the concept of musical realism fulfils a valuable historiographical function and as such it will be indispensable for as long as historians of music do not despair in their pursuit of the goal of elucidating the inner unity of an epoch (*Realism*, p. 123).

An approach to musical connections that Dahlhaus presents with a certain respect in *Foundations* but which does not actually figure prominently in his own writing is that of the 'Russian Formalists,' such as Victor Shlovsky, who advanced his thesis around 1920. Formalism has the advantage of being a history entirely internal to art.

> ... the history of an art form was held to consist in the gradual stereotyping of aesthetic perception and the increasing alienation this occasioned as artistic devices were renewed. In other words, new forms are generated, roughly speaking, by the aesthetic attrition of old ones. This approach marks a new departure within intellectual history by breaking with the distinction traditionally made between genesis and validity, between what a work is or means and the conditions under which it came into being. ... Its main methodological point is to construe the aesthetic aspect of art works not in terms of metaphysics, i.e. using the categories of the philosophy of beauty, but in terms of history. In formalist theory the history of art takes the form of a chain of innovations (*Foundations*, p. 127).

Here is a method at last which combines aesthetics and history, to provide a history of art which is true to both history and art. There are other aspects of art worth exploring, of course, but formalism does claim that it is possible, if not wholly desirable, to describe the history of an art in purely

artistic terms. Dahlhaus finds the technique to be flawed by excessive rigourism (for new forms can be generated by new expressive content as well as by the ossifying of old forms), by the fact that innovation is not that which distinguishes art from non-art, by its historical limitations, and by the fact that for new ideas one can turn to the past as easily as to the future (a move demonstrated by the authentic performance practice movement). So Dahlhaus does not recommend the formalist approach, but he desires one that is less flawed but equally well integrated.

The approach he does recommend is an eclecticism which is aware of all historiographical possibilities and uses whichever method is best suited to the task in hand. "Furthermore music historians, like their political counterparts, incline towards eclecticism in their methodology. This is clearly a questionable approach by the standards of philosophy, but not necessarily so as far as the writing of history is concerned" (*Foundations*, p. 24). This approach sits well with his conviction that "history in the singular is a fiction," (*Schoenberg*, p. 91) and that modern narrative techniques can perhaps best reflect the fractured modern view of reality. Over-all narrative is to Dahlhaus an impossibility.

> 'Histories' in the plural, with their individual or collective subjects and their amenability to traditional or modern narrative methods, are subsumed into an all-enveloping 'History' that is a process without subject. ... 'Music' writ large does not lend itself as a subject to narrative history (*Foundations*, p.49).
>
> Just like 'nature in its entirety' in the natural sciences, 'history in its entirety' is a conceptual premise in the humanities, and not an empirical object of investigation. It is the ground under the historian's feet, not a thing that he can pick up and scrutinise. When he does talk about it — and he is at perfect liberty to do so — he ceases to be an historian and becomes a philosopher (*Foundations*, p. 126).

Thus one of the tenets of Dahlhaus' historicism – that History is a myth – becomes an historiographical principle of eclecticism. The outworking of this principle can be seen in the structure and detail of *Foundations*, which examines the usefulness of a wide range of methods rather than espousing a unified approach. It can also be seen in Dahlhaus' *Nineteenth-Century Music*, which lacks an over-all narrative or methodological thread to tie it together. The book ranges from art music to kitsch, from the sacred to the profane, but in both content and format it presents each 'history,' be it that of the Rossini style or *Biedermeier* music, as separate, though related,

histories. Connections are made, to be sure, but the 'inner unity of the epoch' is demonstrated far more convincingly in the more limited *Realism*.

Historiography and Aesthetics

As mentioned above, Dahlhaus' desire, like that of the formalists, is to unite history and aesthetics, so that the historical and aesthetic significance of great works coalesce as clearly in written history as they do in practice.

> Nevertheless the thought suggests itself that it must be possible to reconcile the autonomy aesthetic with a sense of history, to do justice at one stroke to both the historical and the aesthetic dimensions of musical works without sacrificing either coherence of presentation or the strong concept of art — a concept that has been threatened but, for the moment, not seriously undermined by attempts in recent decades to elevate the documentary view from an extrinsic approach based on cultural history to an intrinsic, aesthetic one rooted in immediate musical experience. Yet it is unlikely that this reconciliation will ever take place unless an interpretation arises that allows us to see the place of an individual work in history by revealing the history contained within the work itself. Art history receives its vindication only to the extent that the historian has read the historical nature of works from their internal constitution; otherwise it remains an *ad hoc* arrangement imposed upon art and art works from the outside (*Foundations*, pp. 28-29).

There may be no single approach that satisfactorily unites historical and aesthetic judgements; on the other hand, throughout *Foundations* Dahlhaus demonstrates the impossibility of completely separating the two. Music-historical thinking and serious musical aesthetics both arose about the same time, and have interacted ever since (*Foundations*, p. 71). The tradition of the musical canon, a prerequisite for the historian, rests primarily (though by no means exclusively) on aesthetic judgments about which works are great enough to be included in the repertoire. "Art history is forced to accept from esthetics its object of study" (*Esthetics*, p. 71). Analysis rests upon aesthetic presuppositions. Facts are selected as important or rejected as irrelevant on the basis of biases that include aesthetic beliefs. Different aesthetic theories generate different historiographical approaches; for instance, the theory that the essence of art is self-expression leads to a music history made up largely of composer's biographies (*Foundations*, p. 20-22). And to create a history which is a history of an art and does not merely treat works as so many documents, the historian must take into account art theory. History can

even provide a 'new' aesthetic virtue, as the music of the remote past can be valued for being past, and alien, and thereby exciting and different. This is "aestheticizing the historical." (*Foundations*, p. 71) Thus history and aesthetics are inextricably intertwined, if not unified.

The interdependence of aesthetics and history, of aesthetic and historical judgement, is a major theme in all of Dahlhaus' more theoretical writings, and brings me to the subject of the next chapter, which is concerned with the "historicization of the aesthetic," the other side of the coin.

Chapter 3

AESTHETICS

Is Aesthetics Historical or Systematic?

"The system of esthetics is its history..." (*Esthetics*, p. 3). Dahlhaus' comment is surely intended to startle. The whole discipline, he claims, extends properly no further back than the eighteenth century (to Baumgarten) and surrendered its constituent parts "to historical studies or philosophy of history, to technology or psychology or sociology of art ..." (*Esthetics*, p.2) around 1900. The only "attempts at restoration" he mentions are those of phenomenology. He is here open to attack from all sides: from those who trace the 'esthetics' of music, that is, thinking about music, back to the early Greeks; from those beside the phenomenologists who are currently pursuing the discipline in the firm belief that it **is** a discipline; and above all from all those who perceive aesthetics as a systematic and normative division of **philosophy**, rather than as a descriptive branch of music history. Why, at the very beginning of a book entitled not *Geschichte der Musikästhetik* but simply *Musikästhetik*, did he make such a polemical statement? And what can it possibly mean to say that the system of aesthetics is its history?

To the first question - 'why take such a position?'- there are answers on several levels. First, Dahlhaus **is** a polemicist, and loves to startle the reader with contradictions, whether real or apparent. Second, Dahlhaus is not only an historian, equipped by training and inclination to view things historically, but also an historicist who finds the explanation for everything

in history. To explain a systematic discipline through its history is quite consistent with his usual approach. Third, Dahlhaus' area of specialization is the music of nineteenth century Europe, and Europe in the nineteenth century is undeniably the time and place when aesthetics as a named discipline was most unified and had the greatest effect on musical life.

> Thinking and talking about music was assumed to 'belong to the matter' as much as practicing music; adequate listening to music was supposed to have a few philosophical and literary prerequisites; these maxims were part of the underlying basis of nineteenth-century music esthetics — and music esthetics is essentially a phenomenon of the nineteenth century (*Esthetics*, p. vii).

Aesthetics was not considered independently, as a discipline of its own, before the eighteenth century, however true it is that people thought and wrote about the arts and music before then. And musical thought has in general taken a turn away from the literary and the philosophical and towards the formal and mathematical since 1900. To that extent Dahlhaus' limiting of music aesthetics to the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries has some justification.

To say that the **system** of aesthetics is its history may only mean that, as Dahlhaus shows by the organization of his book, different areas in aesthetics – different problems, if you will – have been the focus of attention in different times and for different writers. The history of aesthetics can be seen, then, in Dahlhaus' view, as a kind of *Problemsgeschichte*; to understand the scope of the field of aesthetics, one must cover its history, which has tended to focus on a topic for a time and then to leave it for another topic, rather than, as in the scientific ideal, to accumulate a system of inter-related solutions which one can survey independently of the circumstances which gave rise to them.

Dahlhaus' approach to aesthetics is consistent with his historicism, as I mentioned above; what follows from it is the conviction that aesthetics is not, or is no longer, a normative discipline.

> Music esthetics, at least that of the present, is by no means a normative discipline. It does not prescribe how anyone should think, but rather explains how thinking has gone on in the course of the centuries. And esthetic decision-making is everyone's own affair. Still, it may not be superfluous to know the

> presuppositions that undergird the ideas one takes up as a partisan (*Esthetics*, p. viii).

This statement potentially leaves the critic in a somewhat equivocal position, and I shall consider in chapter four how consistent Dahlhaus can be in this regard. For now I would draw attention to another facet. Dahlhaus' insistence on the historicity of aesthetics in no way implies that he finds aesthetics irrelevant: first, because "there is no reason to regard as obsolete and extinct the thinking of an epoch whose works belong to the living present" (*Esthetics*, p. vii); and second, because "in the everyday patterns of conduct that determine musical activities, 'esthetics of music' is constantly at work, even if without such constant reflecting about it ..." (*Esthetics*, p. vii). Dahlhaus insists on the importance of aesthetics for musical life, on the necessity of understanding the intellectual as well as the formal content of what we listen to, just as he insists on the importance of aesthetics for music historiography. The past is vital to the present, understanding the past is crucial to understanding the present, and the beliefs of the past must form a part of that understanding.

Dahlhaus' approach to aesthetic theory is, then, historical, just as his approach to historiography is aesthetic, that is, founded on aesthetic judgements. In this he differs radically from many other writers on aesthetics. He does not attempt, like S.K. Langer[1] to relate findings in psychology and anthropology and semantics to musical meaning and value. He does not, like Leonard Meyer[2] and others ask how music can be said to mean anything at all. He does not, like Copland[3] or Stravinsky,[4] attempt to elucidate the inner workings of music for an interested but uncertain public. Nor yet does he, like Roger Scruton,[5] seek out the crucial problem, the question which, when answered, will shed the maximum amount of light on

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[1]Susanne K. Langer, *Philosophy in a New Key* (New York: the New American Library, 1942, 1953).

[2]Leonard Meyer, *Emotion and Meaning in Music* (Chicago: The University of Chicago Press, 1956, 1962).

[3]Aaron Copland, *What to listen for in Music,* revised ed. (New York: the New American Library, 1939, 1957).

[4]Igor Stravinsky, *Poetics of Music* (Cambridge, Mass: Harvard University Press, 1942, 1982).

[5]Roger Scruton, *The Aesthetic Understanding* (London: Methuen, 1983).

the phenomenon of music. All these writers, and many others, consic music as a whole, systematically. 'Music' and 'Musical experience' becor for them abstractions, generalizations to be contemplated abstractly. F Dahlhaus, the interesting questions are more concrete: what did **this** wri say at **this** time about **this** work. His is, in short, not a systemat approach, a fact that offends some anglophone reviewers.

Aesthetic Systematics

Though Dahlhaus' aesthetic observations are offered primarily conjunction with historical and historiographical arguments (even *Esthet* is arranged chronologically), his ideas can be drawn together from the disparate contexts to show a consistent pattern. Dahlhaus shies away fr offering even the appearance of a closed system. His writings betray systematic aesthetics rather than an aesthetic system, a coherent idea musical aesthetics that is implied but not spelled out, yet well worth t trouble to reconstruct.

A convenient way to begin to examine anyone's aesthetics is to a what the person thinks about the artist, about the artwork, and about t audience; and which of the three is found to be most important.[6] Dahlhaus' writings it is the artwork which is crucial. His entire interest historian, critic, and aesthetician is focussed on musical works, and on t idea of the work. Looking at his understanding of the idea of the music work is the best way to come to an understanding of his musical aesthetic

The Musical Work of Art

It is in one way hardly startling that the idea of the musical work art would form the linch-pin of an aesthetic. The whole of contempora

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[6]This schema is related to that suggested by M. H. Abrams in *the mirror and the lamp* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1953) but I omit, except for a brief discussion of programme music, his category of the universe referred to by the work of art. This is because Dahlhaus, like most writers on music in the twentieth century, regards the musical work first as a world unto itself with only internal referents, and only secondarily as a work which may possibly refer beyond itself.

'classical' musical life is centred around works. Whole academic careers are devoted to the analysis of musical works, and to divulging the history behind their composition. Musicians all over the world spend their lives repeatedly performing the 'great' works – the standard repertoire or musical 'canon.' We routinely choose what to listen to – which concerts to attend, which recordings to buy, or to play – according to our knowledge of particular pieces. We listen to our favourites over and over and over again, expecting that every time they will be recognizably the same. The concert hall and the recording studio have given us an imaginary museum of music, and as in a real museum we can go as often as we like to contemplate the same works, and from time to time to encounter works that are new to us.[7]

As in the world of the plastic arts, some in the 'avant-garde' have challenged this idea of the fixed work, seeking to create musical experiences that necessarily vary from performance to performance. An element of chance is introduced – aleatoric music. Dahlhaus was disturbed by this trend, and two of the essays in *Schoenberg* are devoted to the defense of the idea of the musical work.[8] In the face of the desire of the avant-garde to emphasize musical process and performance, Dahlhaus defends the idea of the musical work: not as a self-evident aspect of musical life,[9] but rather as an historical development of proven worth. He does not argue: "You are making musical works but trying to pretend they are something else." Rather, what he says amounts to: "The idea of the musical work of art is a recent invention that has limited application but is necessary to the art character of music and therefore worth preserving."

Taking these ideas in turn, let us first examine the idea that the musical work is a relatively recent development.

> ...that music might be an opus absolutum, a work in itself, freed from its sounding realization in any present moment, suffused only around 1800 into the consciousness of 'connoisseurs and amateurs.' ... we should be blind captives of a

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[7]As in the art world, the musical galleries that feature new works are less frequented than the great musea which house the old masters!

[8]Cf. "Plea for a Romantic category: the concept of the work of art in the newest music," (1969) pp. 210-219; and "On the decline of the concept of the musical work" (1971) pp. 220-233.

[9]Dahlhaus does point out that the audience hears aleatoric music as a fixed work, since the listeners are ignorant of the possibilities not realized. Cf. below in the section on the artist.

> habit of speaking were we to minimize the resistances met by this idea and pass over them lightly. ... Music's existence in the guise of an author's works is problematical (*Esthetics*, p. 11).

Before 1800, music's transience was emphasized. Dahlhaus mentions Adam of Fulda, who, in 1490, characterized music as a meditation on death, a *meditatio mortis*, and Bonaventure, who excluded music from among works of art because works of art are beautiful, useful, and solid (*opus pulchrum, utile et stabile*), and music, while beautiful and useful, is obviously not solid. Compared to the literary arts, even the idea of notating music is a relatively late development, as the system of notation that we now use only began to be developed around the ninth century, and is still being modified.

Music was notated for ease of performance, and to make easier the sharing of pieces among, for instance, cathedrals and courts. It was not particularly developed in order to preserve works indefinitely. For centuries individual works of music were regarded as being of little moment – as examples of a genre. A work was judged as a good or poor fulfilment of the requirements of the genre it represented, or as suiting or not suiting the kind of occasions for which it was composed. A mass setting composed for a particular festival, for instance, might, if it were well received, be used again as it stood the next year or in another church, but it was just as likely to be re-tailored to fit another event, changed as need and fashion dictated, or simply discarded and replaced. A secular work might be popular for a season, forgotten the next. There were clear criteria, always, for what sort of music was wanted for each occasion – what a setting for the mass of a feast day needed to be like, what was wanted in a madrigal, or a pavane. These criteria included rhythms, formal structures, melodic characteristics, even, for church music, specific rules. These expectations changed with time and changes of fashion, but they formed the tradition of a genre. The expected criteria, instead of particular works, were what was passed from one generation to another. The individual pieces were expected always to be new. Even chants, that were passed on as individual works, were treated by composers as so much material to be used, to be embellished, overlaid or altered for the occasion. Chants were (and often still are) otherwise regarded as vessels of the words they set, as

mnemonic devices or reliquaries embellishing the far more precious thing contained. Folk songs, too, to take another example, survived as individual songs in a way, and yet in another way they represent traditions of songs rather than songs per se. They varied from singer to singer, and from one performance to another, and perforce they changed over time. The nineteenth century collector's hunger for the 'authentic' version was doomed to frustration from the start.

This lack of regard for the individual work held sway well into the eighteenth century, only gradually giving way to the idea that a particular composition can have great merit on its own. The old idea is made manifest in the way Handel recycled his own works, and in the way J. S. Bach ignored his predecessors' music and produced new music for nearly every Sunday of the year (and presumably expected his successor to do the same). It is, indeed, a very natural idea for so transient and function oriented a craft as music.

This attitude, in fact, prevails today outside of the culture of 'classical' music. All living folk musics, which are oral traditions, exhibit the same fluidity with regard to what might be notated. Jazz, too, relies on interpretation and re-creation rather than on fixed works; the 'standards' are tunes to be manipulated more than repeated. Indeed, it could be said that in this age of recordings, it is the particular performance rather than the composition that is regarded as a work of art in Jazz. Popular music shows clearly the drive for the new, the discarding of the old, and the need for works that fulfill formulas and fit functions. Thus are retained, only slightly altered in some respects by recording and mass production, ancient attitudes towards music.

Having touched on these things, Dahlhaus concludes:

> One should not ... accuse the destruction of the work concept of violating the nature of music, but rather accuse it of the reverse, of relinquishing a category which, while not founded in the nature of music itself, **has been of fundamental importance for music as an art.**[10]

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[10] *Schoenberg*, "Plea for a Romantic category: the concept of the work of art in the newest music" (1969), p. 212, my emphasis.

It is this importance of the idea of the musical work for the art character of music that leads Dahlhaus to plead for it. He traces the importance of the idea of the work to the idea of music as an art in the intertwined history of the rise of both ideas. The idea that the individual musical work is important in itself – that it is worth preservation, study, and repeated performance – emerged gradually over a long period of time, beginning, according to Dahlhaus, in the sixteenth century, and culminating, according to everyone, in the early nineteenth century with the popularity of the works of Beethoven. Several factors contributed to this development, among them the emergence of the public concert as opposed to courtly entertainment or sacred ritual as the major forum for music, and the increased respect for purely instrumental music that was partly an offshoot of the Romantic desire for inarticulate intimations of the Absolute and partly a result of the growing aesthetic presence of the symphony. The rise of the public concert created an event focussed entirely on music, where music **was** the event, rather than an enhancement of some other event. Increased attention to the music itself contributed to the increased length and formal complexity in compositions, which promoted a desire for repeated hearings. A work which basically fulfils the listener's expectations of a genre can be grasped at a single hearing; a work which, like Beethoven's *Eroica*, stretches the formal boundaries of a genre and introduces multiple innovations, must be heard repeatedly to be understood. This stretching of boundaries has led in our own century to the virtual abandonment of genres, as works became increasingly individual:

> In older, functional music, a work was primarily an example of a genre, as an individual person fits into a succession of generations that extends far beyond him and survives him. A work formed not so much an isolated, closed whole, an individuality enduring in itself, as, rather, it exemplified a type, feeding on the historical substance of this type, which had developed in the course of decades or even centuries, and requiring listeners to connect the work with the type in order to understand it. ...
>
> But since the late eighteenth century all genres have rapidly lost substance. In Chopin's Barcarole (although even this piece invokes a picture of Venice) the peculiar, unrepeatable features are more essential than any general qualities that it shares with other pieces of the same name. The concept of a genre is no longer established in advance for individual works. Rather, every genre fades to an abstract generalization, derived from individual structures after they

> have accumulated; and finally, in the twentieth century, individual structures submit only under duress to being allocated to any genre (*Esthetics*, p. 15).

The individual work has become autonomous.

Dahlhaus details the systematic as well as the historical interdependence of these ideas: the idea of the autonomous musical work, the art character of music, the idea of the concert performance, and the text character of the work. The autonomous work is one which is understood to have meaning in its own right, apart from any particular function, though it may, and often does, retain a form originally dictated by function, as for example Chopin's works in dance forms. This phenomenon produces the musical fulfilment of Kant's dictum that art should be purposive but without purpose[11]. This kind of work requires of the listener more concentrated attention than can be given when the music is mere background or decoration; it requires the kind of attention given in concerts. And like the idea of the work, the idea of the concert is not an inevitable part of musical life:

> The idea that music, even music without a text, can be listened to for its own sake instead of accompanying an action or gracing a ceremonial event is not at all self-evident; indeed it is remarkable. The institution of the concert is as artificial as the works which it serves or which serve it. And the aesthetic justification for autonomous instrumental music was still precarious early in the nineteenth century – at the time Beethoven was writing his symphonies, which were not mentioned in Hegel's aesthetics.[12]

Thus the autonomous work both requires and rewards the effort of contemplation symbolized (and made possible) by the concert. With the concept of the work, music, which is more naturally regarded as a process,

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[11] "The function of the polonaise or mazurka, namely, to serve as dance music for aristocrats or peasants, clung to them even after Chopin stylized them into concert pieces, as emotional coloring and as images in memory or fantasy of long-ago festivities. Kant's specification of beauty as 'purposive without purpose' contains a meaning that he never intended in his *Critique of Judgment* : that purposes are indeed expunged as external features but preserved as traits of character" (*Esthetics*, p. 15).

[12] *Schoenberg*, "On the decline of the concept of the musical work" (1971), p.221. Dahlhaus notes elsewhere (*idea*, p. 4) that, though the institution of the concert relied upon the bourgeoisie, who bought the tickets and filled the halls, the idea of the concert and of autonomous art actually sits rather badly with bourgeois morality, which required that everything have a use.

becomes an object, and becomes a candidate for aesthetic contemplation. Dahlhaus sees this as a necessary connection: without the objectification, there can be no aesthetic object.

> [The 'work' concept] includes the idea of a shape, the element of concreteness, whereas music, at least in its original sense, is less an object which can be subjected to scrutiny than a process into which the listener is drawn...
> Yet it would be wrong to be rigorous in denying music the chance to become an aesthetic object.[13]

> Aesthetic judgment, then, proves to be a historically circumscribed form of evaluation which is based on the work concept and on the sharp distinction between art and non-art.[14]

> "The supreme reality of art," says Walter Benjamin in his *Origin of the German Tragic drama*, "is isolated, self-contained work." The concept of a work formed the center around which classical esthetics circled (*Esthetics*, p. 13).

The musical work contributes to the art-character of music in another way. The work is tied to the possibility of survival, and survival is at least an indicator of possible aesthetic value.

> Ever since its earliest, tentative formulation in the sixteenth century, the concept of a musical work has been linked with the idea of survival or even of timelessness. That a work does not end with the moment of its creation, but survives for decades or centuries without ageing, is seen as a guarantee of aesthetic quality, even as the only safe one, though one cannot deny that sometimes a trivial work, which is not a work in the real sense, displays more tenacity in staying alive than an important one.[15]

The survival, and indeed existence of a work, depend on notation, on its existence as a text. Though the identification of text with work is not as close with music as with language, as the 'reading' of a musical score requires at least imagining the sounds, while reading language does not, Dahlhaus maintains that notation is practically required not only for the

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[13] *Schoenberg*, "Plea for a Romantic category: the concept of the work of art in the newest music" (1969), p. 212.
[14] *Schoenberg*, "On the decline of the concept of the musical work" (1971), p. 230.
[15] *Schoenberg*, "Plea for a Romantic category: the concept of the work of art in the newest music" (1969), p. 211.

survival and continuity among performances of a work, but also, in the case of 'great' works, for their creation.[16]

Dahlhaus defines music, and the musical work, as "a coherence of tones"[17] or a "coherence of relations among tones" which are perceived either in studying the notation or in retrospect by the listener.[18] This coherence of relations is the object of study by analysts and critics, and it is richness of relations coupled with individuality that helps determine the relative merit of a work (a matter I shall deal with more fully in the next chapter) which points out the inter-connectedness in Dahlhaus' mind of the ideas of the autonomous work, notation, and art character or aesthetic merit. These are, as he himself notes in all the works cited in this context, old-fashioned views to hold, views which arise from Romanticism. His aesthetics holds that aesthetic merit is analysable, that great works can and properly do "jut up out of the rubble of history," that musical meaning

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[16] "Yet text character is not the same as the written form as such. A text is not music by virtue of the fact that it is notated, but only when its creation presupposes notation, and indeed a kind of notation which represents the structure of the work instead of merely prescribing how the music is to be performed. Text character and work character are closely connected.

...The work and text character of music, which already seems endangered by the tendency to use graphic notation, is dispensed with entirely when it comes to musical graphics. A graphic score is more of a challenge than notation; it is not the image of a composition, but rather a stimulus to improvisation....

By relinquishing communication by means of representational notation one seeks to attain musical immediacy. Notation is rejected as if the written form, the text character of music, were a shell which had to be broken in order to get at what is the essential point. Yet it is doubtful whether the immediacy of which originality and newness are expected is not itself a phantom. The initial associations to which a piece of musical graphics gives rise are almost always banal, for spontaneous reactions adhere to what is familiar and part of the usual routine instead of bringing forth something that is new. Detours, reflection, and experiments are far more likely to lead to originality. But **the medium of musical reflection is notation**. Thus it is not only a vehicle of convention, from which the enthusiasts of improvisation seek to liberate themselves, but it can also in fact be a means of avoiding the kind of triviality that is brought about by spontaneity" (*Schoenberg*, "On the decline of the concept of the musical work" (1971), pp. 226-7, my emphasis).

[17] " John Cage's dadaism illustrates, rather than obliterates, the commonplace that music is a coherence of tones" (*Analysis*, p. 38).

[18] " The meaning of music can be specified - in a crude oversimplification that neglects emotional characteristics - as inner coherence of the relations among the tones constituting a work. ... Musical meaning is 'intentional'; it exists only insofar as a listener grasps it.
Is the meaning of music to be read more easily from notation or from sound? This question has no firm answer *a priori*..." (*Esthetics*, p. 12-13).

resides in relationships, and that immediacy and freedom require reflection from both the composer and the audience. The more contemporary view holds that music is and should be by its nature spontaneous and evanescent, existing only for the moment. Dahlhaus holds this aesthetic to be illusory.

Ingarden's Ontology of the Musical Work

The idea of the musical work is philosophically problematic, however. When the experience of music is so transitory, how can the work be said to exist at all? Hegel, for instance, granted the work "only slight, vanishing degree of objectivity" (*Esthetics*, p. 12); for Hegel, music is characterized by its very impermanence. Herder, too, noted the contrast between music as an 'energetic' art and the 'plastic' arts. Where is the object for contemplation? There is, of course, the score. Nicolaus Listeneus favored that answer in his treatise *Musica* of 1537, for it is the score that survives the composer. But the score is not entirely identical with the musical work.[19] The score needs interpretation in sound to become the work. But the word 'interpretation' raises red flags; each performance of a work varies, and more than a little. It is not for nothing that we casually refer to Karajan or Toscaninni's 'Ninth,' and mean their interpretations of Beethoven's ninth symphony. What relationship can the interpretations be said to bear to the work. Is there one work, or many?

We can say that there is an object because of the *Gestelt* effect, according to Dahlhaus.

> [Music's] objectivity is displayed not so much immediately as indirectly: not in the moment when it is sounding, but only if a listener, at the end of a movement or section, reverts to what has passed and recalls it to his present experience as a closed whole. At this point, music assumes a quasi-spacial form (*Gestalt*). What

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[19]"Yet written speech represents speech to a greater extent than notated music represents music. To grasp the meaning of a literary work, a reader need not bring to mind the phonetic form of the words, nor even know that form. Through the written characters, even if a reader dispenses with imaginative completion of sonorous coloring and speech-gesture, or, with dead languages, is forced to forgo them, still the meaning is transmitted - not quite intact but in its basic features. With music, on the contrary, silent reading, insofar as it is not to collapse into thin abstraction, always represents an inner hearing, translating signs into sound. Musical meaning, in contrast to linguistic meaning, is only to a slight extent, if at all, detachable from the sounding phenomena. To become musically real, a composition needs interpretation in sound" (*Esthetics*, p. 12).

> *has been heard solidifies into something out there, an 'objectivity existing on its own'* (*Esthetics*, pp. 11-12).

In this, and in Dahlhaus' designation of the work as an 'intentional' object (*Esthetics*, p. 13), the aesthetics of phenomenology is called to mind – especially that of Roman Ingarden. Dahlhaus engages Ingarden specifically in chapter XIII of *Esthetics*, "Towards the phenomenology of music." Though Dahlhaus never actually says he agrees or disagrees with anyone, his use of many of Ingarden's ideas, coupled with the fact that he treats Ingarden in much the same way he treats Kant – that is, by respectfully pointing out an inconsistency rather than, as with Schopenhauer, scorning the whole project – leads one to suspect that Dahlhaus is basically in agreement with Ingarden (as indeed I believe he is with Kant). Since Ingarden is far more specific on this matter of the ontological status of the work than Dahlhaus, a brief look at Ingarden's position will help clarify the matter.

The problem is to define what kind of object this locationless work can be. There are, for the phenomenologist, three possibilities: real, ideal, or intentional. Ingarden sees the musical work as the perfect example of an intentional object. In *The Work of Music and the Problem of its Identity*,[20] Ingarden details the nature of the musical work, beginning with what is clear from observation (or rather, from the experience of listening), and from what is clear making inferences about what is not so obvious. I will pass over his observations and arguments, and report only his conclusions.

The work, according to Ingarden, is not identifiable with any of its performances. It is individuated not by a specific location in time and space, as a real object would be, and as performances are, but by a "specific, unrepeatable selection" of qualities (*Work*, p. 62).

The work contains both sounding and non-sounding phenomena. Sounding phenomena include sounds and constructs of sounds like melodies, motifs and chords. The non-sounding phenomena are founded in the sounding ones. Non-sounding elements include quasi-temporal structure, musical

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[20]Roman Ingarden, *The Work of Music and the Problem of Its Identity*, translated by Adam Czerniawski, edited by Jean G. Harrell (London: Macmillan Press, 1986). Hereafter referred to as *Work*.

motion, forms, emotional qualities, references to external objects, and "the element made up of aesthetically valuable qualities and the qualities of aesthetic values." A word about each of these might clarify the categories, and make it clearer what sort of thing Ingarden considers to be 'non-sounding.'

Quasi-temporal structure is the organization of a work's time. Musical motion is a function of melody, which creates the illusion of movement 'up' and 'down' in musical 'space.' The terms are metaphorical, but not therefore meaningless or useless. Musical forms are, properly, particular to each work, though schematized forms like sonata form can be generalized from a number of works, and they arise from a multiplicity of sound constructs. Forms introduce rationality into a work. Emotional qualities appear upon sound constructs, are exclusive to music and only resemble non-musical emotional qualities. They are to be distinguished from what the listener feels while listening, and from the feelings of the performer and the composer, though they may not be unrelated to the latter. Extra-musical references, or 'representational themes' are themes which, without texts, make one imagine a more or less distinct object. This quasi-musical object belongs to the music without being a quality of it, and forms a higher artistic whole with the music. Musical references are unlike literary ones, in that music refers by resemblance. Lastly, there is the 'element made up of aesthetically valuable qualities and the qualities of aesthetic values.' Ingarden comments that not all forms and contents are equally valuable aesthetically. Each of the sounding and non-sounding elements may be aesthetically good, bad or indifferent; taken together, they determine the aesthetic value of the work. The only hitch is that no one has yet catalogued all these possible qualities (*Work*, pp. 83-115).

The work originates in the creative activity of the composer, but thereafter its existence is independent of him or her. It is a purely intentional object, with its physical, or ontic base in the score, which is a schematic prescription for performance. In the case of recordings, what is recorded is not the work itself, but the effects of sound waves. Each playing of the record is a new performance. Only through the listener's understanding do the sounds of any performance designate the artistic

remainder of the work, the sounding constructs and the non-sounding elements. The work is not, however, identical with the listener's experience or construct. The work is intra-subjectively accessible, and perdures over time (*Work*, pp. 116-122).

That various parts belong together and form a whole "in fact is the concept of art in general," according to Ingarden (*Work*, p. 123), but not all musical works form artistic wholes. (Dahlhaus would probably hold that those which do not are not works in the strong sense of the word.) What holds works together? Like Dahlhaus, Ingarden refers to the *Gestalt* effect. Unlike Dahlhaus, Ingarden spells out how this works. Smaller parts, or phases, are structured into a whole by a 'sounding aspect' or *Gestalt* that can spread itself in musical time. This requires the retention by the listener of the recent past. It also requires expectation, or 'protention', of what will occur. Successive elements combine to form higher auditory structures. Larger parts and works have more than a single auditory aspect, which must be unified by some other means, for instance by forming each other's complement or contrast. Hearing a work as a work requires a 'living memory' that allows the present to affect one's understanding of the past. In this way the elements of a work can be understood to interact with each other (*Work*, pp. 123-136). In sum:

> ...a true musical work develops in performance into a certain product that in its temporal spread is reminiscent of the structure of a process but differs from a simple process precisely because it is an organized totality in which specific parts belong to each other. In the case of the best possible composition, they postulate each other or they fulfill the postulates of other parts constituting their fulfillment or completion (*Work*, p. 132).

The score leaves many areas of the aesthetic object, such as timbre and the finer points of phrasing, indeterminate. These may vary from one performance to another so much that different, but equally valuable, aesthetic qualities are revealed in the work. Different epochs may prefer different sets of realized qualities. Hence over time, the work may appear to change. Ingarden argues that although it necessarily appears so to the historically bound individual or community, actually the work does not change, because the work is not an aesthetically univocal object. Within the

parameters set by the score, which is the final authority with regard to the question of when an interpretation is so different as to constitute a new work, there is a multiplicity of possible 'concrete profiles,' all potentially of equal aesthetic value.

> A musical work, understood as an artistic product of its composer, is first a schema designated by the score, second a determined multiplicity of possibilities designated by the areas of indeterminacy of the schematic product — each providing in realization one of the work's profiles (*Work*, p. 150).

Though Ingarden hesitates to assign aesthetic value to a greater multiplicity of possible realizations per se, he suggests that the greater the number of possible profiles, the more likely a work is to survive changes in aesthetic taste. Recording does not, in Ingarden's view, change the situation; even the composer's best performance does not limit the possible realizations where the score does not.

> The composer's artistic achievement is not so much the realization of a unique model performance but rather the creation of the work as a schema subject to musical notation that ... displays a variety of potential profiles (*Work*, p. 157).

Dahlhaus appeals to a similar ideal of a multiplicity of possibilities when considering the historical status of the work and critical and analytical judgments about the work. Considering the possibilities and challenges offered by reception history, which in its most radical forms threatens to do away with the idea of the work altogether (*Foundations*, p. 151), Dahlhaus notes that perceptions and interpretations of any given work do change radically over time, and that therefore some form of reception history would be valuable. But for Dahlhaus, as for Ingarden, the score remains the crucial arbiter (*Foundations*, p. 165). More than Ingarden, Dahlhaus emphasizes the importance for understanding any work, of understanding its time of origin. He suggests, though, that to emphasize unduly either the origin of a work or the gradual unfolding of its meaning over time leads only to those well-known historical distortions, a history of decline or a history of progress. In line with his own dictum that not all insights are available to all times (*Esthetics*, p. 87), Dahlhaus suggests that for each work a point of perfection in interpretation may be found, a time

when it was most nearly perfectly understood. This time would usually be some time after it was written, for great works' meaning needs to be unfolded. He suggests, for instance, that such a point may have been reached in the case of Mahler's music sometime around 1970. This is an historiographical matter, but also an aesthetic one, for to judge the height of a work's interpretations requires criteria to judge among interpretations. Some of those suggested by Dahlhaus are still historiographical, like the simple popularity and frequency of performance of a work, but Dahlhaus favours the more aesthetic criterion of 'cogency,' whereby the most complex interpretation that both coheres and honours the text should be judged the best (*Foundations*, p. 160).

There are some differences between Dahlhaus and Ingarden, mostly arising from the fact that Ingarden seems to regard music primarily from the point of view of an educated but not specialist listener, whereas Dahlhaus regards it from the point of view of an analyst, critic, and historian. Ingarden the amateur regards music, with no outside referents, as having only one 'level' or 'stratum,' in comparison to literary works of art, which have several; for instance, the text, its meaning, and the object it represents (*Work*, pp. 50-54). Dahlhaus the specialist finds in music many strata which fulfill the criteria set by Ingarden of universality to all examples of the form, continuity within itself, and heterogeneity with regard to all other strata; for instance, the notes, the instrumentation, the sounds of chords, the functions of chords, and so on. Again, Ingarden regards varying interpretations primarily as ways of performing a work, where Dahlhaus regards them as the results of varying analyses of the score. This is a difference in point of view only, as varying analyses all have their implication for performance, and varied performances (if aesthetically valuable) arise out of a (possibly unconscious) analysis of the score, but the difference is suggestive of differing emphases.

Does the musical work have an extra-musical referent?

On the question of extra-musical or literary referents, Dahlhaus agrees with Ingarden that they are not a necessary or inevitable aspect of a

work – it is not true that every work has its inner programme, as some Romantics thought – but that such references can form part of the aesthetic object of some works. Dahlhaus is scrupulously careful when dealing with programme music, defending the aesthetic of programmes but careful in his application of it. In fact some composers usually thought to be synonymous to programmatic music, like Liszt, are in Dahlhaus' view more interested in purely formal experiments, while a apparently strict formalist like Schoenberg is shown to have had his programmatic moments.

The desire to write programme music, and to invent programmes for works like Beethoven's symphonies carelessly left unsupplied with them by their composers, arose out of the general public's unease with the idea that music could have meaning and significance without a text. This idea of 'absolute' music arose among certain Romantics like E. T. A. Hoffmann, Wackenroder, and Tieck,[21] towards the end of the eighteenth century, but spread though the general musical public very slowly. It came to be universally accepted by musicians only at the very end of the nineteenth century, and from the evidence of programme notes still is not completely accepted today. The popularity of Hegel's philosophy hindered the acceptance of the idea of absolute music, for Hegel thought poetry to be a higher art than music, and vocal music (allied with poetry) to be far superior to instrumental music (*Esthetics*, p.29). Brendel[22] based his defense of programme music on a version of Hegel's position, saying that programme music, aspiring to poetry, is in fact a higher stage than vocal music or purely formal instrumental music. The arguments for and against programme music proceeded from different premises. The proponents of programme music argued from the philosophy of history that programme music was an historically necessary development, and therefore desirable. Their opponents argued from psychology that it is impossible to deduce the exact programme from a work, that all listeners construe the work's

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[21] For the full story, told at some length, see *Idea*. I am here using the term in its most minimal meaning; Dahlhaus scrupulously notes the variety of implications given to it over the years by different writers, from music whose wordless imprecision gives access to the Absolute, to music that is hermetic and formal, related only to itself.

[22] Karl Franz Brendel, *Geschichte der Musik*, 4th ed., 1867, p. 643, cited in *Esthetics*, p. 57-8.

significance differently. Dahlhaus finds both arguments specious: no argument from the philosophy of history is convincing today, and the argument from psychology was flawed by misunderstanding from the start. The programme of a symphonic poem was never meant to be 'deduced' or 'decoded' by the listener. Liszt and others used the programme as material to be manipulated, like scales and harmonies, not as a story to be narrated by the music (*Esthetics*, p. 59). For the listener, the programme was to be part of what was brought to a work by an educated person, not what one was expected to get out of listening.

Programme music and absolute music are not mutually exclusive, in Dahlhaus' view. Rather, they are two ends of a spectrum between which there are innumerable degrees. Programme music is not a type that is easily appreciated just at present, however, since programme music is a product of "an era when experience was shaped by reading and when the literature on a subject was scarcely less important than the subject itself" (*Esthetics*, p. 60). The only charge against programme music that really sticks is that it falls apart formally if the programme is removed (*Idea*, p. 137), a charge against which Dahlhaus defends Liszt and others, showing that, though their forms were unorthodox, they are perfectly comprehensible, even, or perhaps especially, without knowledge of the programme [23]. He levels this same charge against contemporary composers who seem to him to be using programmatic references to cover over weaknesses in form.[24] Even this charge, however, does not stick if, as Brendel would have it, the programme is aesthetically integral to some works, and for examples of this Dahlhaus turns to Schoenberg. He cites "Verklärte Nacht" as an outstanding example of a programme that is both integral to the aesthetic object, and nevertheless a strong example of the form of 'developing variation.' "Pelleus und Melisande" is an even more striking case as, according to Dahlhaus, it is organized simultaneously according to four different formal concepts: those of scene, leitmotiv,

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[23] See for example *Analysis*, pp. 75-79, or "Issues in Composition," in *Between*, pp. 40-78.
[24] *Schoenberg*, "On the decline of the concept of the musical work" (1971), p. 233.

compressed symphony, and sonata form. Here is a complex form that accommodates a literary subject without abandoning autonomy.[25]

From the foregoing it seems clear that, although Dahlhaus is perfectly willing to admit extra-musical references as part of the musical aesthetic object, he does not regard them as fundamental to music; music may include a literary reference or refer to extra-musical things; equally, and without thereby being less valuable, it may have relations only internally. Music is still, for Dahlhaus, to be defined as a "coherence of tones."

The Audience

Having seen what Dahlhaus makes of the musical work of art, let us turn to the question of what he makes of the audience. The audience is important to Dahlhaus both historically and aesthetically. The historical development of audience behaviour and attitudes has had important effects on the history of music. The importance of the shift from an audience who regarded the performance as a gloss on another event – and who felt quite free to talk and socialize throughout – to an audience who sit silent and focussed on the music, has already been mentioned. Throughout the late eighteenth and early nineteenth century, there was another shift in the way listeners heard and evaluated music: from a habit of relating the music to the words, to an attempt to hear the form and structure of purely instrumental music. (This latter shift is still noticeably incomplete in many listeners, but has carried the field among those listeners whose voices are loudest, the critics and analysts.) The shift from polyphonic to harmonic writing may also have to do with a shift in intended audience, for polyphony is clearest to the participant and predominated in times and forms where small groups gathered to enjoy music by playing and singing together. The rise of large public concerts for non-participatory listeners may not be unrelated to the rise of music structured more chordally.[26]

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[25] "Schoenberg and programme music" (1974), in *Schoenberg*, pp. 94-103.

[26] *Schoenberg*, "On the decline of the concept of the musical work" (1971), p. 221.

For Dahlhaus as well as for Ingarden, the work only fully exists as aesthetic object in the mind of the listener considering the work in retrospect:

> Musical meaning is 'intentional'; it exists only insofar as a listener grasps it (*Esthetics*, p. 12).
>
> ...literature about music is no mere reflection of what happens in the musical practice of composition, interpretation, and reception, but rather belongs, in a certain sense, to the constituent forces of music itself. For insofar as music does not exhaust itself in the acoustical substrate that underlies it, but only takes shape through categorical ordering of what has been perceived, a change in the system of categories of reception immediately affects the substance of the thing itself (*Idea*, p. 63).

In other words, what affects the listener's understanding affects how music is heard and understood. Writing about music is not irrelevant to music itself, because it affects the audience.[27]

For the purposes of considering audience reception of a work, it is not necessary to regard the audience as a collection of so many individuals, according to Dahlhaus. Aesthetic judgements are not altogether subjective; we make such judgments according to the categories and attitudes we have learned. Taste is not really an individual matter (*Analysis*, p.3). It is conditioned by many things, class and aesthetic traditions among them.[28] Inquiry into reception must therefore take into account aesthetics as well as sociology; reception history cannot be the empirical science dreamed of by its advocates. The matter of musical literacy must also be considered; "Musical habits of hearing are too diverse to let one admit that statistics based on chance selection of subjects ... are a collection of opinions on the same issue" (*Analysis*, p. 25). If the aesthetic object is to be regarded as constituted in the mind of the listener, it must be admitted that not all minds are capable of doing so. The idea of the qualified listener comes from analysis and aesthetics, which attempt to define what the ideal listener should hear. That some opinions are better qualified than others is an idea

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[27]This assumes, of course, that what is written is read and understood.

[28]Ingarden also notes the development of aggregate judgments of music, though he attributes them to discussion and agreement after the fact. See *Work*, p. 153 ff.

that is not favoured in our anti-elitist age, but Dahlhaus argues that the idea that all opinions are of equal value is as 'metaphysical' an idea as the idea that they are not, and betrays a democratic and quantitative prejudice. The idea of the qualified listener is needed to clarify the object under inquiry. Is music mere entertainment? Then all people are equally well qualified to state whether or not they have enjoyed a performance. But if the work **as a work of art** is to be investigated, only the opinions of those who are capable of perceiving the work as a work of art are relevant to the inquiry (*Analysis*, pp. 25-6).

Taste is an eighteenth century category. It was the preoccupation of philosophers interested in art in that century, and their descriptions border on the utopian (*Esthetics*, p. 8). Nevertheless, Dahlhaus maintains that aesthetic judgments can and should be judged as more or less adequate to the case; not all judgments are tenable in the face of the work. It does not do, for instance, to mishear a sonata as a medley. Aesthetic judgements are, inevitably, affected by group norms, but they are also affected by and answerable to the work. The charge of elitism is irrelevant:

> It is an error to grant to a 'group norm' which considers a pop tune the essence of music and a Beethoven symphony a hollow din equal aesthetic privileges as to the opposite 'group norm.' The factual judgements underlying the 'group norms' are not equally founded. A listener capable of doing justice to a Beethoven symphony is generally equipped to cope with the musical issues of a pop tune, but the reverse is not true. Arrogance of the initiated must not be defended, but that nobody has the right to blame musical illiterates for being illiterate does not change the fact that illiteracy provides a weak foundation for aesthetic judgments. (*Analysis*, p. 6)

Prejudice against musical literacy is socially motivated,[29] and musical illiteracy is an obstacle to adequate hearing. Musical illiteracy is,

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[29]The charge of elitism and snobbery against the proponents of the 'avant-garde' cannot, according to Dahlhaus, even be levelled on social grounds: "An élite in the disreputable sense is a group which, in the first place, exercises power without rational legitimacy and, secondly, shuts itself off against outsiders. Yet it would be absurd to accuse the composers and audiences of new music of one or the other of these traits. Equally without foundation is the continually repeated and rather servile attempt to denounce sympathy for serial or post-serial music as snobbism. A snob ... tries to acquire prestige by aping the views of a ruling class and by adopting opinions that are not rooted in his own personal experience. But a ruling class whose conspicuous consumption includes serial music does not exist" (*Schoenberg*, "Progress and the avant garde" [1966], p. 18). It is a moot point whether the present strong presence of the avant-garde within University schools of music

moreover, no guarantee of aesthetic 'immediacy.' Far from being more appreciative of the immediate experience, the uninitiated may simply lack comprehension (*Analysis*, p 54). It is true that the idea of contemplation as the behaviour appropriate to art comes originally from the metaphysics of beauty, and so may be in danger of leaving behind the art object in pursuit of 'ideas.'[30] But 'contemplation' is still necessary to perceive the musical work of art. Such contemplation is aided by education; music history helps to make old music comprehensible. Reflection is an aid, not a hindrance to the immediacy of aesthetic experience. Indeed, Dahlhaus believes that aesthetic contemplation of temporally remote works is impossible without knowledge (*Esthetics*, p. 73). *Pace* Herder and others who placed immediacy and analysis in opposition, Dahlhaus says that 'primary' immediacy (total absorption and comprehension during a performance) requires complete familiarity with a work and its context, which requires a great deal of knowledge for temporally remote works; moreover, true immediacy is secondary immediacy, moderated by reflection (*Esthetics*, pp. 84-5). The *Gestalt* of a work depends upon informed expectation and memory working together, and is not complete until the entire work is viewed in retrospect. Complex works require more reflection than do simple ones. Wagner, according to Dahlhaus in *Richard Wagner's Music Dramas*, depended on the exercise of such reflection by his listeners. He expected the audience to concentrate, remember and relate leitmotivs, and to perceive the complexity of his forms, not to sit back and let the music wash over them.

Charges of elitism bring to mind the question of the relation of music to society at large. Music was originally, and in many cultures still is, a craft related to specific functions. The current or former function of a

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now gives them the status of a ruling élite; certainly they do not form a powerful group among those who promote recordings or determine concert programmes.

[30]"From the metaphysics of beauty comes the notion that the appropriate norm of behavior toward a work of art is contemplation, self-forgetting absorption in a thing. The esthetic object is isolated, removed from its environment, and regarded with strict exclusiveness as if it were the only thing that existed. Yet the appearance, all to often, is for contemplation as a mere route or even a detour on the way toward the idea of 'Inner Form.' This idea is sought, not so much in the thing itself, the shape assumed by the spirit, as rather somewhere behind or above the thing, in a world beyond. The metaphysics of beauty, as a philosophy of art, is always in danger of getting beyond art, estranged from art" (*Esthetics*, p. 5).

work is an aesthetic fact to be kept in mind, according to Dahlhaus. If, for instance, a work was intended as music for worship, or has become so (like popular songs adapted as hymn tunes) it is wrong to disregard that fact merely because the work in question does not seem to the critic to be suitable for worship. To take an instance treated quite extensively by Dahlhaus: what constitutes patriotic or nationalist music is a matter of function. It is no use to point out that the traits considered archetypically Hungarian in one work are the same as those marking another work as Norwegian. If the works are regarded by the people in question as authentically nationalist, then they must be accepted as such.[31]

Musical works can acquire and shed functions over time. Dahlhaus cites Umberto Eco's view that works can have both utilitarian and symbolic functions. These can change independently of one another. The utilitarian function might change from sacred to concert music, for instance, as in the case of some of J. S. Bach's choral music. The symbolic function, or interpretation, might, as in the case of the works of Mozart, change from Romantic to Classicist and back again. As long as a work has both kinds of functions, however changed, it is likely to remain actively in the repertoire (*Foundations*, pp. 162-4).

The greatest change in the function of music has been the change from craft to art, from being characterised chiefly by function to having a relative autonomy, serving no purpose beyond existing as aesthetic objects for contemplation. Some music, as mentioned before, is still functional, and some autonomous works have functional forms. Some were intended to be functional and have come to be regarded as autonomous. The difference between functional and autonomous music is minimised by such reinterpretations, and is denied altogether by some, especially those anxious to subsume the study of music under the study of society. Nevertheless, it is a distinction on which Dahlhaus insists. The difference is more than one of perception: to deny it is to miss the difference between accidental and essential features, and to ignore the fact that some

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[31] "Nationalism and Music" in *Between Romanticism and Modernism*, pp. 79-101.

functions result from autonomy.[32] The sociological approach denies that the essence of art is art character. It may be true that the enjoyment of art is linked to class, to consumption, and to escapism, but this is not, according to Dahlhaus, all there is to art.[33]

The Artist

A third area of inquiry in aesthetic systematics is that of the artist. Ingarden's attention was turned primarily to the performer as interpreter; by contrast, Dahlhaus virtually ignores the performer to consider the composer. The composer is both free and bound. Dahlhaus repeatedly cites Krenek's[34] assertion that the composer is free to posit axioms; at the same time Dahlhaus insists that no one is free of his or her historical context. The present historical context (in 1987, when the essay was written) is one of intensifying reflection on the interaction of musical parameters. Theory is vitally important to composers, according to Dahlhaus; even in the middle ages, when the practice of composition was regarded as a craft quite separate from the study of music theory, which was one of the seven liberal arts, theory and composition interacted (*Esthetics*, p. 14). Composers' concern with theory has continually increased since then until the present; some composers now give the impression of being concerned with nothing but theory. Theory is for the composer "the essence of historically determined principles and categories, which are at the root of a composer's musical thinking."[35] Every composer is free to make his or her own use of theory; in fact, every significant and innovative composer can be regarded as having his or her own poetics, which Dahlhaus defines as "an idea, permeated by reflection, concerning the making and production of musical compositions."[36] Poetics for anyone but the composer is a descriptive, not a normative task; the composer can construct rules for him or herself, but

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[32] *Schoenberg*, "Avant-garde and popularity" (1975), pp. 28-30.
[33] *Schoenberg*, "The musical work of art as a subject of sociology" (1974), pp. 239-40.
[34] Ernst Krenek, b. 1900, Austro-American composer, teacher and writer.
[35] *Schoenberg*, "Schoenberg's poetics of music" (1976), p. 74.
[36] loc. cit.

no-one else can do anything but "merely demonstrate connections and fundamental conditions within a group of principles and categories on which an individual oeuvre is based."[37] What theory, in the abstract, can do for the composer is to chart the possibilities open to him or her. Dahlhaus believes firmly that the composer needs to be theoretically sophisticated. *Poiesis*, *praxis*, and *theoria* (making, doing and theorizing) are mutually interdependent, and some theory will always operate, whether consciously or unconsciously. Composers reject theoretical speculation at the risk of having nothing to say.[38]

To be theoretical sophisticates is not the only advice Dahlhaus has for composers, though it is the key-note of his attitude. He suggests that destructive musical Dadaism, in the manner of John Cage, leads only to banality; and that improvisation leads rather to clichés than to spontaneity. Innovation, clarity of form, coherence, and comprehensibility are among the cardinal virtues of composition in his view, and these can be best achieved by reflective composition of works, not by dependence on the inspiration of the moment in performance.[39] The trend to avoid composing works results, he acknowledges, from an aversion to 'fossilization' or 'reification'; this is something to avoid, but not an inevitable result of the objectification inherent in the creation of works as opposed to events or processes.[40]

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[37] loc. cit.

[38] "The Mendelssohnian argument that musical thinking is too complex to be expressed in words is confronted ... by the antithetical assertion that musical imagination which eschews or attempts to eschew hard and fast verbal definition on principle must end up by becoming diffuse. Although explicit theory may ultimately prove insufficient, it is evidently indispensable as a starting-point. An extreme aversion to reflection, which is afraid of doing harm to thinking 'in' music by using categories which are much too imprecise, in the final analysis allows what it seeks to protect to wither away. The speechless silence which considers itself confirmed and secure in the silent possession of what alone is essential, tends in the end to become intellectual poverty. And although we can hardly wish that the surplus of theory of the serial and post-serial phase will repeat itself in the next few years, there is a danger (and not only in music) emanating from the unconcealed lethargy and the hidden animosity with which a 'conceptual' effort that attempts to express itself verbally as precisely as possible is at present greeted everywhere. A subjectivity which wishes to speak solely in sounds because words are superfluous or even misleading will perhaps at some stage come to the depressing conclusion that it has nothing more to say, even in sounds." *Schoenberg*, "A rejection of material thinking?" (1984), p. 283.

[39] "Composition and improvisation" (1972), in *Schoenberg*, pp. 265-273.

[40] *Schoenberg*, "On the decline of the concept of the musical work" (1971) p. 225.

The relationship between composer and audience is a matter of great concern, as it has been for the better part of the twentieth century. Dahlhaus notes that the discussion on the avant-garde and popularity seems doomed by a lack of definition of terms and woolly thinking to go nowhere. 'Popularity' itself is an ambiguous term, since just who is to be included in the notion is unclear and usually left unsaid. Dahlhaus defends the right of the avant-garde to write what it wishes for its own audience.[41] Not all music is accessible to all audiences, and this is how it should be. It is true that the style of the late eighteenth century achieved a remarkable degree of accessibility to a wide range of people, but that kind of 'multivalence' is not possible to all ages, and it does not do for a composer, or anyone, to be unduly hostile to his or her own age (*Analysis*, p. 27). The claim that what the avant-garde writes is paper music is another argument that degenerates into misunderstanding and name-calling. 'Paper music' is a straw man, according to Dahlhaus. There is no music written without regard for sound. Some music is formally more difficult to hear than other music, but it is not necessary for everything to be audible or to be understood for music to be effective. Dahlhaus notes that the (as yet unwritten) history of hearing does not necessarily bear a close resemblance to the history of composition, and he speculates that the rift between composer and audience may simply be constitutive of modern music.[42]

Nevertheless, Dahlhaus suggests that the composer have some regard for the audience. The composer should recognize that the point of view of the audience necessarily differs from his or her own, for where the composer hears his or her work as one of many possibilities, open to further modification, the audience hears it as a finished work. They cannot possibly hear the other options that are in the composer's mind. Aleatoric music appears to Dahlhaus to be an ultimately unsuccessful attempt to impose this peculiarity of the composer's point of view on the audience, and he recommends against it.[43] Dahlhaus also views comprehensibility as a

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[41] "Avant garde and popularity" (1975) in *Schoenberg*, pp 23-31.

[42] "Audibility" in *Analysis*, pp. 53-56.

[43] *Schoenberg*, "Plea for a romantic category: the concept of the work of art in the newest music" (1969), p.218.

compositional virtue – if it can be achieved without sacrificing theoretical sophistication. In this case too he takes the part of the audience as opposed to the composer, for in order for music to be comprehensible, it must balance complexity in one aspect with simplicity in another. If this is not done, the audience will focus on one of the aspects to the exclusion of all others, as has happened in the case of Bach interpretation, where either harmony or polyphony has been emphasized, though both are equally complex and important. In this Dahlhaus disagrees with Schoenberg, who believed that to be coherent, all aspects of a musical work should be equally complex.

Summary

Let me sum up the systematic elements of Dahlhaus' aesthetics examined so far, before going on in the next chapter to consider his theory of criticism. Dahlhaus' aesthetics reflects the scope and the limits of his reading, which seems from his writing to include virtually everyone writing in German, not a few writers in other Eastern European languages (Ingarden, for example), and very few writers in English. Most notable in the traces they leave on Dahlhaus' writings are Kant, Ingarden, and Max Weber. This is not to say that he did not read what was written on music in English; his bibliographies show that he did, but writing in English seems to have had very little effect on his thinking. This makes him a challenging and valuable writer for English readers: challenging because his ideas are often quite alien and his polemics addressed to discussions which may be unknown; valuable because his ideas are often quite alien, and can force us to rethink and broaden our assumptions.

Dahlhaus is a widely-read German scholar trying to make sense of the world of European art music. He finds aesthetics to be central to this endeavour; at the same time he finds European art music to be wholly the result of certain particular historical developments. Accordingly, he considers everything in the light of its development. Notwithstanding the historical contingency of music, he argues strongly for the protection of music as an art, rather than as a craft providing music to fit non-musical

functions. He sees as central to the development and continuation of musical art-character the idea of the autonomous musical work, which provides an object for aesthetic contemplation. This idea is itself an historical one, in danger of being discarded. The work of music is an intentional object, originating in the creative activity of the composer, physically founded on and ultimately limited by the score, and only fully constituted in the mind of the listener. The work may or may not include as an integral part of itself as an aesthetic object references to extra-musical things.

The listener is affected by his or her historical situation; music is perceived by the listener through an historically contingent set of aesthetic categories. The work can and should be considered rationally, analytically, by those who are capable of doing so. This produces for the listener a 'second immediacy,' the appreciation of the work in retrospect, when the interaction of all the various parts of the work can be considered, a more important moment for Dahlhaus than the emotional impact of a work during performance.

The creator of a work should set about working with a sophisticated awareness of music theory in order to create a work that is satisfying to the musically literate listener, that is, a work that is complex and coherent and innovative, and so on. The composer should understand the point of view of the audience, but should not particularly have to concern himself with providing music accessible to the musically illiterate.

Dahlhaus, as I mentioned at the beginning of the chapter, claims that twentieth century aesthetics must be descriptive and historical rather than normative and prescriptive. It is clear from the summary above that he does not entirely live up to this goal. He has very strong opinions on contemporary musical life, and does not hesitate to voice them. Nor does he ignore perceived weaknesses in the aesthetics of past writers in order simply to relate what happened. On matters like Schopenhauer's metaphysics and the follies of aleatoric music he is anything but descriptive and neutral.

Dahlhaus does succeed in bringing out the historicity of aesthetic matters, even if he does not quite manage to convince one that he would be

happy to see things change as radically in the future as they have in the past. The historical origins of ideas usually regarded as natural and immutable, like the idea of the work, are brought out consistently and emphatically. The real question for aesthetics is that of where Dahlhaus' approach leaves the matter of criticism and criteria. What status can they have when aesthetic judgments are historically conditioned and the very criteria used are contingent and mutable? This is part of the topic of the next chapter.

Chapter 4

THEORY OF CRITICISM

Aesthetics and Criticism

For Dahlhaus, the *raison d'être* of aesthetics is criticism. What results from aesthetic contemplation (beside pleasure) is aesthetic judgement. "Esthetic reflection terminates in criticism" (*Esthetics*, p. 85). Aesthetics as a form of inquiry, as a branch of philosophy, is the investigation of the grounds of aesthetic judgement; in describing how people think and have thought about music, aesthetics describes how and why they formed aesthetic judgements. If you will, the critic is the engineer to the aesthetician's scientist – except that the two roles more often coalesce in the arts than in the sciences.

I compare the critic to an engineer deliberately, for in Dahlhaus' view the critic's role is not of lesser practical importance to musical life than the engineer is to daily physical life. The musical work as an aesthetic object to be contemplated is constituted in the mind of the (qualified) listener. Accordingly, the work as perceived by the listener is profoundly affected by the categories and attitudes the listener brings to the performance, which in turn may be shaped by what the listener has read in the way of musical criticism.

> Consciousness of music is determined, to no small extent, by literature about music. Even people who scoff at it can hardly escape the effect of what is written. Musical experience almost always involves memory-traces from reading (*Esthetics*, p. 62).

The critic's job, then, is one of great practical importance, for it can help or hinder the adequate reception of the musical work. The critic, in helping to

shape musical opinion, can also affect what is programmed and played, though it is also undoubtedly the case that some works remain popular in the face of indifference or even hostility from the critics. It is desirable, then, for the smooth and rational ordering of musical life, that music criticism should be as rational and well-ordered as possible. Unfortunately, musical criticism as a whole is hardly known for being rational and well ordered. 'Chaotic' and 'contradictory' are words that spring more readily to mind. The oft remarked upon tendency of even great critics to give, at least once in their lives, a strong opinion later contradicted by virtually everybody robs criticism of some credibility. Hanslick's polemics against Wagner come to mind, along with the frosty initial critical receptions of many of the pillars of the present day repertoire.

Dahlhaus suggests two points in opposition to this mistrust of critics. First, the situation is not as chaotic and contradictory as at first appears; rather, there is a surprising unanimity of opinion among critics through the ages. To support this opinion, he notes that differing verdicts are often reached on the basis of differing criteria and are thus not actually contradictory, that not all understandings are possible at all times and that therefore the biases of the critic's era must be taken into account, and that

> ... among critics who deserve the name and have not merely accidentally stumbled into the career, agreement over what is essential, the ranking of works, is not so rare as might be wished by a prejudice that pounces on contradictions in criticism so as to be able to denounce them as signs of absurdity (*Esthetics*, p. 88).

Second, Dahlhaus holds that any lack of agreement among critics is merely a sign that what is needed is a stronger tradition of criticism, one that takes into account the varied and historical nature of criteria.

> Even when real, the chaos can be explained as a result of the absence of tradition in criticism. The lack of continuity, as mentioned, is not in the nature of criticism but rather based on the prejudice that combats and confounds it (*Esthetics*, p. 86).

What is needed to form a critical tradition is a coherent theory of criticism. Dahlhaus does not claim, in *Esthetics* or elsewhere, to present such a theory, all worked out and ready for use. Instead he offers notes towards

such a theory; a compendium of things that must be taken into account for such a theory to be viable and practically useful.

The Critic

Dahlhaus is quite specific in *Esthetics* about the job of the critic. The critic's task is first to decide whether or not a given work is art. "A critic's arguments reveal the esthetic experience or culture at his disposal ... but what makes him a critic is his ability to separate art from non-art" (*Esthetics*, p. 88). Following Kant, Dahlhaus claims that this judgement that something is or is not art is a completely separate judgement from that of whether it is or is not beautiful (*Esthetics*, p. 35); accordingly, the judgement about art involves concepts, and, *pace* Herder, reflection (*Esthetics*, p. 84-5). Moreover, sometimes where critics seem to differ violently about a work's status as art, the very violence of the polemic shows their essential agreement. "Failed efforts and innocuous successes provoke no zealous warnings about the doom of art" (*Esthetics*, p. 88), such as were offered by Hanslick in his tirade against Wagner. Second, the critic is to rank works of art: "...what is essential, the ranking of works." Third, the critic must defend and explain his or her judgements. "... a decision between art and non-art has already implicitly been made at the outset of an interpretation; when the interpretation has been carried out, it may be understood as the justification and proof of that implicit decision" (*Esthetics*, p. 91). It is this explanation of judgements that usually provokes the controversy, for it is here that the critic's biases and background show most strongly. Yet it is in such explanation that we may find good reason for a seemingly obtuse judgement; for a critic who judges, say, Mahler, by the criteria of classical ideals of proportion and perfection can be expected to find him wanting.

> Deciding about a work's artistic quality presupposes, however, if it is to be valid, that the critic is aware of the profound differences between ultimate principles to which esthetics can appeal: between esthetic ideas that are not reducible to each other and that occasionally even enter into competition with each other (*Esthetics*, p. 88).

These profound, irreducible differences between ultimate principles are, according to Dahlhaus, what a theory of criticism should sort out.

Some past theories of criticism have failed spectacularly at this task, in Dahlhaus' view. All attempts to group criteria hierarchically under the banner of 'Beauty' were (and are) doomed from the start:

> ...nothing has exposed esthetics to general contempt more than the strained effort, dictated by insistence on system, to gather all possible specifications of works of art around the central idea of beauty, or even to deduce them all from this idea. The futility of such an effort, not to say its utter nonsense, remained hidden to an age whose thinking was confined esthetically by classicistic norms and methodologically by a hankering for systems. The conviction that fitting into a system would guarantee or even fortify the truth of ideas is one of those nineteenth-century Utopias that have collapsed in the twentieth. No matter how high anyone may estimate the influence of the spirit of the age, it is hardly conceivable how people could fail to notice that esthetic ideas form no hierarchical system, but rather coexist, heteronomous and irreducible. The attempt to subordinate them to a supreme idea, that of beauty, and to conceive the differences among them as mere modifications betrays a misunderstanding of their nature (*Esthetics*, p. 88).

Similarly, other systems of criticism have tended to focus on one criterion or group of criteria to the exclusion of others. For example, the 'New Criticism' approach focuses on 'immanent interpretation' or self-referentiality. This method tends in music to assign greater merit to works of greater complexity; it does not, according to Dahlhaus, apply well to small simple works which nevertheless may be perfect after their kind.[1] It is an approach that takes works out of history, and yet is best applicable to the works of its own time, when ever-increasing complexity was

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[1] "New Critics postulated that every trait of a work of art, from the details to their connections and to the whole that proceeds from them and includes them, can be grasped without regard for traditional types and schemes, by way of the work's own individual law of form" (*Esthetics*, p. 90).

"Insignificant, undemanding mediocrity eludes a method that has been developed to deal with esoteric works, difficult of access; such a method finds no foothold in something banal. But what might be held against this method more seriously would be its inapplicability in the face of simple structures that are perfect despite their simplicity. Thus Hans Mersmann's argument that a musical work's susceptibility to analysis is a criterion of its value confronts an impasse with folk-song and another impasse with the noble simplicity of the classics.

Does greater complexity always mean greater merit? This idea is too crude to do justice to musical reality, although it may be appropriate enough as a response to the tendency to denounce all complicated music as incomprehensible..." (*Esthetics*, p. 91-2).

particularly sought by composers. 'Immanent' criticism depends heavily upon music analysis to reveal the particular complexity and coherence of a work. What exactly is the relationship between subjective critical judgement and apparently objective analysis?

Criticism and Analysis

Criticism, as the application of aesthetic judgements, is, as noted above, commonly regarded as a subjective procedure. Analysis, on the other hand, is regarded as objective.

> the opinion that value judgments are nothing but open or masked judgments of taste — admitting argument but no conclusion to the argument — is just as firmly rooted as the complementary conviction that musical analysis is 'free of value judgment' (*Analysis*, p. vii).

Dahlhaus desires their reconciliation; or at least, recognition of their mutual interaction. One might suppose his goal to be the conferring on aesthetic judgements the status of objectivity, but the end result is rather to undermine the objective status of analysis – and the whole idea of objectivity. Aesthetic judgements – judgements of taste – are not really completely subjective, he affirms. Explanations can be found for them in the group opinions of social classes and other groups. Moreover, Dahlhaus claims that the subjective origin of a judgement has no real relevance to its validity. All aesthetic judgements are initially based on feelings which may (or may not) later be supported by rational analysis. And judgement without emotion is barren and empty, according to Dahlhaus.

> Objectivity arises, not from the critic's forgetting and extinguishing himself, but rather from the effort to mediate between the aesthetic object and inherent attributes of the subject. Just as a judgment based on feelings without objective content is empty, so too is any attempt at objectivity without the substance supplied by emotion (*Analysis*, p. 5).

In other words, one first feels a work to be great in some way, and then analyses it to discover the nature of its greatness.

Objectivity itself is "a postulate more or less complied with," rather than an attainable goal, according to Dahlhaus. He accords some validity to

the definition of objectivity as 'intersubjectivity,' or agreement among subjects, but it is an historically limited validity, which cannot be applied in times of rapid and radical musical change when agreement is hampered by the inability of the majority of the musical public to comprehend what is going on. In addition, as shown earlier, not even the most basic of musical 'facts' have the kind of objectivity that some might wish for them. For instance,

> Whoever presumes a rigourous concept of objectivity and demands that a musical phenomenon, to be objectively valid, must have a cause grounded in the acoustical structure could deny the objective existence of strong beats in a measure; instead of deriving always from the same acoustical basis, they are marked by changing and divergent means — not only by dynamic accents but also by small agogic expansions or by regularly recurring rhythmic or harmonic patterns. Strong beats in a measure are, in phenomenological terms, not 'real' but 'intentionally' given; yet they are 'objective' — characteristics of the object (*Analysis,* p. 5).

Nevertheless, aesthetic judgements, to be valid, must be more or less adequate to the musical facts, such as they are. Criticism, to be convincing, must rest on analysis.

Analysis, in its turn, is dependent on aesthetic premises.

> Aesthetic judgments, at least the cogent ones, are sustained by factual judgments which in turn depend on analytic methods demonstrating the musical attitude of a period. And inversely, analytic procedures, including those without preconceptions, are tied to aesthetic premises (*Analysis,* p 7).

Such premises are basic ideas (which may or may not be formulated by the theorist) about how music is constituted and what in music is aesthetically primary. For instance, theories of musical harmony were not formulated when harmony was thought to be less important than melody or counterpoint. These premises may remain hidden in the theories themselves, which present themselves as completely objective descriptions of the inner workings of music, but they manifest themselves in distortions by analyses of musical facts. For example, there are two theories on which analyses of sonatas can be based. One emphasizes the unity of the form; the other emphasizes contrast. Any given work may appear successful when examined by one model but not the other. The apparently value-free analytic procedure rests upon, and is controlled by, an underlying aesthetic belief

about what in music is most important – in this case, whether unity or diversity is more desirable.

Every analysis rests on a theory. One must have some idea of how a musical work is constructed before any analysis can take place; otherwise there are only unrelated notes on a page. Theories, however, rest upon analyses; they are the generalized result of the analysis of many works. As a result of this circularity, some theories are unfalsifiable.[2] The application of the criteria developed by these theories leads inexorably to pre-determined aesthetic conclusions.

Analysis can be either a means or an end, therefore. It can be a means to the construction of a theory, or it can be the end of the application of a theory. In the former case, the analysis treats the work as a document, as one example among many, and examines only the limited aspect of the work with which the particular theory is concerned. In the latter case, the aim of the analysis is more comprehensive; the analysis will, ideally, cover all aspects of the work in an effort to discover its particular, individual virtues. This is the kind of analysis described by Dahlhaus in the essay "Plea for a Romantic category":

> Analysis is an attempt, which never quite succeeds, to understand and demonstrate that all parts of the work relate in a meaningful way to each other and to the whole, and that each one is subsumed in the function it performs. The triumph of analysis consists in demonstrating that a work – at least, a successful work – cannot be other than it is (*Schoenberg*, p. 218).

This sort of analysis is itself historically limited. It is dependent upon the listener's or the analyst's assumption that works are aesthetically meaningful wholes, an assumption that is, by Dahlhaus' own demonstration, scarcely 200 years old. The basing of value judgements about music on aesthetic criteria is similarly limited.

> The founding of a judgment of musical works on aesthetic criteria is not so self-evident as it appears to a listener raised in the tradition of the nineteenth century, a tradition which reaches far into the twentieth. The concept of an aesthetic judgment is a historical, and hence variable, category whose origin does

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[2]Dahlhaus cites Schenker's system as an example. Put simply, Schenker claims that all 'great' works can be reduced to a similar structure; works which do not exhibit this structure he dismissed as inferior ....

> not reach back beyond the eighteenth century and which seems to have lost relevance in recent decades. One usually identifies by the crude labels 'old' and 'new' the music of the epochs surrounding the century and a half generally considered to represent the era of 'music proper.' Those epochs had characteristic forms of judgment strictly distinguishable from aesthetic judgment and identifiable by the formulas 'functional' and 'historical' (*Analysis*, pp. 10-11).

'Aesthetic judgement' is characteristic of the nineteenth century and centred on the idea of 'the beautiful.' In the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries, 'functional judgement' considered the appropriateness of the work to its task. 'Historical judgement' is a concern of the 'new music' of the twentieth century, namely, whether or not a work is 'attuned to its time.' Each kind of judgement has its typical criteria, and who has authority to criticize changes with the change of criteria. The commissioner of a work is entitled to judge its suitability; the amateur critic, as a representative of the public, is the judge of originality and beauty; the professional, or academic critic is the only one deemed qualified to judge on the formal, problem-solving success or failure of the avant-garde work (*Analysis*, p. 11-15).[3]

Criteria

Non-aesthetic criteria can, then, be applied to what we commonly consider to be works of art. (Presumably aesthetic criteria could equally be applied to non-art.) But the matter at hand is the consideration of this category of aesthetic judgement, historically limited though it may be. Dahlhaus shows that even within these limitations, aesthetic judgements and aesthetic criteria are not independent of historical, and moral, considerations. Let us then turn to his consideration of these historically conditioned, sometimes contradictory criteria on which aesthetic judgements are based. Dahlhaus warns that historically, the language of

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[3]Since Dahlhaus wrote this in 1970, I would judge the situation to have changed as regards the kind of judgement characteristically applied to new music. New works are no longer so likely to be judged according to whether or not they extend musical 'progress,' rather, in a climate of 'neo-romanticism' and eclecticism, some of the criteria of aesthetic judgement (though not necessarily those related to beauty) are undergoing a renaissance. 'Historical judgement' certainly was characteristic for much of this century, but now it seems to have lost its hold.

aesthetics is ambiguous and imprecise, and that the attempt by the historian to enforce uniformity would lead only to further confusion (*Analysis*, p. 31). The same stricture apparently does not apply to the contemporary critic of music, for Dahlhaus claims that a theory of criticism, presumably with a theoretical precision of terms, is what is needed to restore credibility to the practice of musical criticism (*Esthetics*, p. 87). In the process of sorting out precisely what the criteria of criticism mean, he points up the mixture of the aesthetic with the non-aesthetic, and delineates the precise ambiguity each harbors.

"The irrelevance of morality in art seems self-evident" (*Analysis*, p. 17). Moral elements do inhere in art, and the judgement of art and moral judgement are not separable in reality – moralism cannot exclude art; aestheticism makes moral decisions into aesthetic ones – but the distinction between moral and aesthetic judgement remains intellectually useful. Some aesthetic ideas have moral overtones; these include the ideas of originality, of the genuine, and of kitsch and musical trash.

Originality, the definitive category of the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries, is actually a double concept, according to Dahlhaus, one element of which apealed strongly to the moralists of the time "The two elements it contains – the presentation of the immediate and nonreflective and that of the new and unpredictable – are ... not always reconcilable" (*Analysis*, p. 31). The first of these elements – the presentation of the immediate and nonreflective – appeared to moralists to place emphasis on the feelings of the composer as the origin of art. The unoriginal composer was suspected of being untrue to himself.[4] Dahlhaus points out, however, that the immediate expression of feeling is usually banal and clichéd,[5] and that the

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[4]Dahlhaus asserts rather than argues that this is a moral criteria; I would suggest that his reasoning may be that the category of truthfulness or untruthfulness to oneself is essentially a moral category.

[5]That immediate expression is so often banal is a reminder that the other aspect of the criterion of originality — that of presenting the new and unpredictable — is essentially historical. However appropriate something is to one's feelings, it is only original, in the sense of being new, once.

composers lauded as most original were also the most reflective (*Analysis*, p. 19)[6].

The category of the 'genuine' also has strong moral overtones, according to Dahlhaus. It is an ambiguous category because it can be defined in opposition to the imitative, or to the fabricated, or to the fraudulent. It has an unambiguous function, however; it is always a conservative and polemical category (*Analysis*, p. 20). Dahlhaus mentions that "as an aesthetic category [genuineness] is both dubious and ineradicable" (*Analysis*, p. 32). The challenge to the historian is to determine exactly what it signifies in any given context. The challenge to the critic is, presumably, to avoid using the category altogether.

The categories of kitsch and of musical trash are interesting in that they have changed their moral implications in the last century, according to Dahlhaus. Kitsch he sees as a middle class phenomenon, trash as a lower or working class one. In the nineteenth century, kitsch, the entertainment of the bourgeoisie, was morally acceptable and trash, the popular music of the working class, was not. In the twentieth century the opposite is the case (*Analysis*, p. 20). The category of kitsch is sometimes confused with that of 'badly composed' music. The two are not the same, and they have very definite historical limitations. Well-crafted was a category that could only be applied with any certainty until the early nineteenth century. Conservatoire standards broke down after that in the face of constant experimentation.[7] The idea of the avant-garde militates against the stability needed to judge something well or badly composed, and epigonal music, formerly quite respectable, sank into triviality. Well-crafted music was no longer necessarily aesthetically good, and music that demolished the

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[6]Dahlhaus also notes that the high priority put on originality had a curious effect on compositional practices in the nineteenth century. Striving to eliminate all 'padding,' all conventional elements, from the motives on which works were based, composers found themselves spinning longer and longer works from shorter and shorter motives (*Between*, p. 42-5).

[7]"Yet the cries of dilletantism invariably raised in the nineteenth century when one composer disapproved of the path taken by another are virtually devoid of meaning and substance; given the lack of criteria, they are no less irrational than the accusation of kitsch which post-1900 avant-gardists hurled at earlier composers in an attempt to relegate them to a distant and forgotton past." *Nineteenth-Century Music*, p. 27.

'rules,' as Debussy's, for instance, proved sometimes to be of obvious aesthetic quality. By Romantic standards, 'prosaic' or 'Kappellmeister' music is not badly composed but insignificant. Romanticism, then, destroyed the idea that derivative but well-composed music was acceptable. At the same time, Romanticism created the phenomenon of Kitsch. Kitsch, according to Dahlhaus, is music that tries to be grandly 'poetic' but fails. It is music which imitates that great effects and sweeping emotions of the great works without the resources needed to put the effort across. It is music written for the amateur, which tries to sound like music for the virtuoso (*Analysis*, p. 31-34)[8]

Just as some categories of criteria have moral implications, some are historical. 'Originality' has historical as well as moral overtones, since a thing that has been done before is by definition not original. Also specifically historical categories are the complementary categories 'new' and 'epigonal' or 'derivative.' Dahlhaus notes that 'new' implies more than chronology; what is new breaks with tradition in some way, appears timely, and has lasting effects. Some works, like some of those of the early twentieth century, continue to seem 'new' for a long time; hence it is not nonsensical to call some music historical periods 'new,' as for instance the 'ars nova' of the fourteenth century, the 'nuove musiche' of the early seventeenth century, and the 'new music' of the early twentieth century. In each of these times change was so radical and had such far-reaching effects that the appellation 'new' continues to be warranted. The impression of newness persisted in each case because the old practice continued alongside the new, which is seldom the case when change happens more gradually and subtly.[9]

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[8]"Musical kitsch, whether rousing and high-flown or soothingly sentimental, is a decadent form of romantic music. When the *noble simplicité* of a classical style descends to the market place, the result is banality — the mere husks of classical forms — but hardly ever kitsch. Kitsch in music has hybrid ambitions which far outreach the capabilities of its actual structures and sounds, and are manifested in effects without cause, empty attitudinizing, and titles and instructions for performance which are not justified by the musical results. Instead of being content with modest acheivements withing its reach, musical kitsch has pretensions to big emotions, to 'significance,' and these are rooted in what are still recognizably romantic preconceptions, however depraved" *Between*, p. 11.

[9]See "'New Music' as historical category" in *Schoenberg*, pp. 1-13.

'Epigonal' or 'derivative' as the opposite of 'new' or 'original' is a nineteenth century category; it is, according to Dahlhaus, a corollary of the nineteenth century awareness of history and emphasis on the new and up-to-date, and also of the new value placed on the individual, original work. Before that time, imitation was a good and necessary part of composition.

> Imitation of models and stylistic copies, in the time of sentimental aesthetics morally and aesthetically suspect of 'lack of genuineness' and of routine in the worst sense of the word, were considered indispensable as well as legitimate until the early eighteenth century. They were actually signs of the solidity of the technical foundation of composition and showed piety toward tradition. Nobody interpreted them as a shameful lack of intellectual capacity.
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> Epigonism is traditionalism become suspect (*Analysis*, p. 22).

Historicism, the heightened awareness of the past and of the relationship of the present to the past, created epigonism as a failing; it also, curiously, made it an easier trap to fall into. Earlier composers had much less access to the music of the past because the old music had fallen out of the repertoire. The lives of nineteenth and twentieth century composers, on the other hand, are saturated with the music of the past. It is hardly surprising if the weaker among them have trouble avoiding the forms of the past (*Analysis*, p. 23).

Dahlhaus has little to say about the more traditional criteria of aesthetics. About beauty, for instance, he has nothing to say except that it makes a poor focal point for modern criticism. He talks briefly about perfection, in order to contrast it with greatness: what is perfect is a 'special world to itself,' can be quite small and simple, and may even be tossed off quite quickly by composers like Rossini; greatness (as a quality, rather than as a rank), on the other hand, requires extra-aesthetic qualities like size or scope or difficulty, and tends to point outside itself to its maker in some way. Sublimity is related to greatness, rather than to beauty, according to Dahlhaus (*Esthetics*, p. 89).

I have already mentioned that Dahlhaus finds in the balance of simple and complex elements a desirable trait as far as the audience is concerned. He mentions further that this quality is probably more useful as an explanation of success than as an indication of relative rank. He would like

to agree with Schoenberg that equally increasing complexity in all aspects of a work is desirable, but he recognizes very clearly that this may make a work quite hermetic as far as most audiences are concerned (*Esthetics*, p. 92).

Criteria come in clusters, rather than singly, Dahlhaus suggests. There is a cluster of criteria that relate to beauty, for instance, and another around the idea of coherence, another centered on the idea of sublimity, and yet another gathered around the idea of expressivity. These clusters are fairly independent of one another, and may even prove mutually exclusive. Music that aims for expressiveness, for instance, may require for that expression more dissonance and a different kind of proportion than is consistent with beauty. Music written according to the aesthetics of coherence, a cluster that arises out of the avant-garde and includes the goal of equal complexity in all parameters, of extreme diversity completely integrated (usually by a system), and so on, is actually unlikely to acheive beauty, either.

Beauty, perfection, greatness, complexity, originality, genuineness, balance, and so on are all qualities that have been found to be unequivocally positive and desirable, even though they may be mutually exclusive. There are other common qualities of music whose presence is not so universally welcomed, which Dahlhaus defends as aesthetically desirable, or even necessary. These include dissonance, inconsistency, paradox, ambiguity, irony, and discontinuity. These qualities prevent music from being boring; in fact, they give a sense of motion and progress within a work. It is these 'negative' attributes which make a work expressive and convey intensity of emotion. There is, however, according to Dahlhaus, a kind of dialectic to this expressivity. To be expressive a work must stretch boundaries, must include elements felt as unexpected or uncomfortable by the audience. But these elements quickly lose through repetition their ability to surprise or shock and become a part of the common language. This phenomenon can be seen particularly clearly in the progress of harmonic language throughout the nineteenth century. As this happens, new ways of creating tension must be found. Dissonance is the clearest and most commonly accepted example of this dialectic; even the interval of the third was once classed as

dissonant. Dahlhaus argues that other 'negative' qualities can be regarded in the same way as expressive devices;

> Some important works — Mahler's symphonies and even Bruckner's — are characterized by inconsistencies and discontinuities, and to deny their existence would be a false defense; rather, a usable theory of criticism ought to do justice to these characteristics. Categories like ambivalence, paradox, ambiguity, and irony, which have long been at home in literary criticism, ought to be so in music esthetics too. When heterogeneous features are consolidated in one work, this does not necessarily mean that the result is questionable or altogether botched. Mannerism is a style, not a lack of technique or of esthetic morality (*Esthetics*, p. 94).

The presence of 'negative' qualities is not a reason to discount or devalue a work; the question is whether or not these things are put to good use. The use of what seems (at least at the time) downright ugly sometimes is a result of an attempt to portray reality, rather than Utopia – that is, from the aesthetics of Truth rather than the aesthetics of Beauty. Dahlhaus notes particularly that the descriptive and the ugly were both understood in the late nineteenth century to be constitutive of musical realism. Both were opposed to classicism and the aesthetics of beauty. The descriptive began to be an important category in music around 1830. It was also an anti-romantic category, as it was tied to the everyday. The aesthetics of the ugly was an extension of the aesthetics of the descriptive, although the ugly also had an attraction of its own for the Romantics (see *Realism*, pp. 29-43).

There is, as mentioned above, a cluster of criteria around the idea of coherence that is particularly attractive to twentieth century tastes. Dahlhaus writes that, *pace* John Cage, "music is a coherence of tones" (*Analysis*, p. 38). As an aesthetic criterion, an abundance of internal motivic (or rhythmic, or other) relationships is the particular coherence of a single work. The less individual the work, the less the relationships matter; a work made up entirely of motives and rhythms characteristic of its genre will exhibit a tremendous number of internal relationships, but they will have no particular aesthetic merit. Precisely which relationships are revealed by analyses is prompted by historically variable premises. There are, according to Dahlhaus, some conditions for testing the relevance

of discovered relations. The piece of music and its parts must be of sharply defined character; they must have individuality. The relationships must appear consistently, and affect the structure of the work. The work must have a high enough degree of complication to need such integration.

Reflecting this set of criteria, twentieth century analysis has sought the integrating 'system' behind the 'facade,' in earlier music as well as that written with such criteria in mind. Does this application of 'parameter' thinking (the separation of pitch from rhythm, harmony, etc.) do violence to earlier music? Yes and no, says Dahlhaus. Abstraction is the way the twentieth century appropriates tradition. One cannot decide the relative merit of insights empirically. The belief that the abstraction of pitch from rhythm is not nonsense is an aesthetic belief, and it forms the foundation of twentieth century analysis and criticism (*Analysis*, pp. 38-41).

Dahlhaus notes that differentiation and integration, a key concept in modern analyses and criticism, is a law of biology transferred to art by analogy. It is an aesthetic postulate rather than a law, and applicable only to certain periods, namely, those with classicist tendencies. The drive to integrate has been important historically. Various practices have become musically more valuable when integrated into compositional procedures; for instance, dynamics, which can be more varied when composed than when added by the performers according to convention (*Analysis*, pp. 42-3).

Summary

It would be good here to sum up my understanding of Dahlhaus' contributions towards a theory of musical criticism. First of all, for Dahlhaus criticism is the practical focus of musical aesthetics; the whole point of aesthetics is to think about the interpretation of musical works of art by critics; presumably also by performers, but Dahlhaus does not mention them.

Criticism requires an understanding of both aesthetic premises and historical circumstances. The critic should be aware of the premises which underlie the various methods of analysis which can be applied to music; he or she should have an intimate, analytically precise knowledge of the piece

under consideration, and also detailed knowledge of the historical background of the work, including such things as the prevailing aesthetic beliefs of its time.

The critic should have an awareness of the history of aesthetics; that is, of the changes in thinking about music over the years. He or she should acknowledge the wide range of possible criteria, and their historical limitations. However, criticism is always bound by its own time, a fact the critic might as well make the best of, even while trying to be aware of differing points of view. In other words, twentieth-century analysis may not be normative for all times, but it is normative now and should be explored to its fullest by present-day critics.

Criticism is a subjective discipline, but it is bound by the (relatively) objective musical work and by the critical tradition as it is received in the critic's own time.

The questions raised at the end of the previous chapter have been clarified, but not yet directly addressed. How, within Dahlhaus' understanding of musical reality, can norms be understood to hold at all? What is the status of aesthetic criteria? I will try at this stage to give the answer Dahlhaus might give; how far those answers are tenable is a matter for the conclusion.

Norms are binding because we believe they are, to put it baldly; more, they are binding because they are more or less agreed upon. We hold them, or are held by them, because the community holds them. They are gained from tradition (through education) and are modified by our own experiences. With this situation Dahlhaus seems quite happy; it is the received situation, and it has seemed valuable in his experience and the experience of those who make up his academic, critical, and musical community, and therefore is worth defending, pursuing and passing on to the next generation.

Dahlhaus himself fails to relate norms and criteria to any ontological categories. Pursuing the connection with phenomenology, his understanding of criteria might put them in the category of 'ideal' objects. However, they are not like Plato's Ideas; they are not eternally given. They are definitely historical. They come into existence at a particular point, hold force for a

time, and eventually cease to hold or to be held. They may endure for quite a long time, for as long as they are held by a large number of people; they may, in fact, remain in force in the face of succeeding, and contradictory criteria, as the criteria of generic function remained effective through the nineteenth century in the face of the criteria generated by the idea of musical autonomy. Criteria can change, as for example the criteria determining consonance and dissonance change over the years. They have objectivity in the sense that they are inter-subjective; that is, they are agreed upon by a number of people who are judged competent to agree on such matters. And finally, they are limited by musical reality, even as musical reality is shaped by the criteria held by the listeners.

Two questions remain: what does the nature of criteria, as described above, imply for the critic's task? And is this the only conclusion teneble in the face of the evidence Dahlhaus presents? These are questions for the conclusion.

CONCLUSION

There are two tasks for this conclusion. First, to sum up concisely my understanding of Dahlhaus' positions; second, to assess the legacy left by Dahlhaus for aesthetics, criticism, and musicology.

Dahlhaus takes an historicist stance towards music history, in the sense that he insists on the recognition of the fact that everything about music, including our aesthetic beliefs towards it, has been invented by humans at some historical point in time; and that therefore the explanation for any facet of music lies in its history. Everything about music has changed in the past and is open to change in the future. He finds music to be thoroughly historical, and history to be a process (or collection of processes) without a discernible goal.

Dahlhaus' historiography reflects this historicism through his refusal to posit a goal or underlying active force in history, even though that would considerably simplify his task. One of the pillars of Dahlhaus' historiography is the idea of structures which endure for a time and, while they last, have power to shape events. His historiography also reflects his conviction that historiography and aesthetics are inextricably intertwined. Dahlhaus shows how every historiographic decision is tied up with aesthetic beliefs, with the canon of great works which is founded largely on aesthetic judgements, and how important the way people thought about music was to the history of music. Despite this evidence of the interdependence of aesthetics and music history, Dahlhaus longs for a complete union between them, such as that attempted by the 'formalist' school.

Dahlhaus' aesthetics focuses on art, on what is human, and in particular the musical work of art, rather than on nature or on aesthetic properties like beauty in general. Perhaps for this reason, he also shows little interest in speculation on the nature of musical aesthetic experience,

preferring to focus on the facts about particular works at particular times. In adopting a position on the identity and existence of the musical work similar to that of Roman Ingarden, Dahlhaus emphasizes again the historicity of music, the dependence of the musical work on the changing perceptions of the audience as well as on the changing circumstances surrounding musical creation.

Dahlhaus also insists on the historicity of aesthetic criteria, which constitute a kind of historical structure, and aesthetic judgements, both of which are, in his view, transmitted through time by tradition, subject to alteration along the way. Aesthetic judgements are, however, not entirely subjective. They are limited by the tradition received by the individual making the judgement, his or her historical circumstances – not all judgements are possible at all times – and by the objective, though intentional, existence of the work in question. Judgements which are not adequate to the work, or which clearly misunderstand it need not, in Dahlhaus' view, be accorded the same respect as judgements which, though possibly conflicting, are in accord with the evidence of the score.

Dahlhaus is quite careful at most times to use relative language, as for instance in his adoption in *Foundations* of the language of 'values' and 'value relations' as defined by Max Weber, and Dahlhaus' constant mention of the historical relativity of music and the beliefs associated with music. However, he shows himself to be more conservative than might be expected from such language when it comes to matters of the present day, arguing that many of the practices and attitudes of the nineteenth century – particularly those regarding musical works and the canon – are well worth preserving and passing on.

Dahlhaus' positions are in some ways, it seems to me, reminiscent of Kant's epistemology – not in the matter of 'faculty' psychology, but in the positing of history (and also of the musical work?) as an ultimately unverifiable transcendent horizon, and in emphasizing the active role of the human mind in imposing categories on received data. Missing from Dahlhaus' epistemology, though, is the idea of the *a priori*. The source of aesthetic concepts and criteria for Dahlhaus is tradition. Tradition is not received passively or applied blindly by the modern, historicist mind, however. The

historically aware mind stands in a dialectical relationship with tradition (an insight stemming perhaps from the Hegelian rather than Kantian tradition); it receives from tradition the categories it needs to form judgements, but at the same time retains or achieves a critical distance that allows the mind actively to re-shape the received tradition. There is tension and alienation in this dual stance towards tradition, which Dahlhaus acknowledges, but he does not suggest any ultimate synthesis that would relieve the tension, which may, after all, prove to be a creative tension as one wrestles with the problem of appropriating and adapting tradition to one's own time.

What is the way forward from here? Where does Dahlhaus leave his readers? I will consider this question from three points of view: that of a reader who wishes to pursue philosophical aesthetics, that of a reader who more specifically wishes to pursue criticism and a theory of criticism; and that of a reader who wishes to pursue music history and historiography.

The reader of Dahlhaus who wishes to pursue philosophical aesthetics will have gained several valuable insights, at the same time, she or he faces in Dahlhaus' writing several formidable obstacles. Among the gains, an acute awareness of the historicity and variability of human beliefs about music seems most important to me, especially in the context of the ahistorical tradition of recent Anglophone writing on musical aesthetics. There is a strong temptation in the writing of any sort of philosophy to say, in effect, "Everyone else is wrong, and I am right." or "Understanding has progressed steadily to this point, and I can now confidently say ...." This is part of the philosphical game, it is how theses are posited for debate and discussion. But this attitude often leads to a kind of historical arrogance that only considers as evidence the current musical situation and ignores how music was used and enjoyed in the past, or in other cultures – or in other parts of one's own culture. It seems to me that an adequate aesthetics of music must make room for all the practical aesthetics of the past and of the world (I say 'practical' aesthetics to rule out those theories which, like that of Pythagoras, had little to do with how people make and

understand music[1]). This is not to say that a theory may not prefer one model over another, as more adequate to the present, or more adequate to the possibilities in creation. But one must, I think, answer the question "How can people live without concert halls and the nineteenth century repetoire?" In other words, how, without waxing nostalgic and devaluing the musical experiences of the present, can one make room for the evident satisfaction afforded by past models of musical performance, and the musical beliefs that went with them? What were the pleasures inherent in monody? 'Practical' historicism, in the guise of the early music movement, is beginning to expand our awareness of the real pleasures of alien musics; this should be reflected in aesthetic theory.

A second positive insight from Dahlhaus on aesthetics is simply the practical value of pursuing it. In a world where the study of aesthetics is often only introduced into musical studies at the Doctoral level, Dahlhaus emphasizes that musical practice is affected by what we believe about music, and what we believe is affected by what is written, or by what has been written, about the nature of music. Insight into the music of the past, which after all makes up the majority of what 'classical' musicians hear and study and perform, is greatly enhanced by understanding of what people thought about music in the past, and the composition of new music is directly affected by what people are thinking about music in the present. Aesthetics is not irrelevant!

In contrast to these two positive insights, that aesthetics are important and that account must be taken of the fact that ideas about music have changed and can change, the aspiring aesthetician must face in Dahlhaus two daunting negative attitudes. The first of these is Dahlhaus' profound distrust of systems. Anyone who takes over Dahlhaus' atitude too wholeheartedly is left with an approach to aesthetics that merely catalogues past and present ideas, rather than investigating the nature of music and musical phenomena. For Dahlhaus, aesthetics becomes a branch of music history, an attitude distinctly uncongenial to those coming out of

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[1] Here already I have used the present definition of music to rule out certain ideas of the past; one indeed cannot escape one's own tradition, but can only make an effort to understand as much as possible of the past.

philosophy. This subsuming of aesthetics under history is compounded in Dahlhaus by the fact that the only foundation for aesthetic beliefs in his eyes is tradition. The positive insight that aesthetic beliefs change hardens into the relativist position that there is no 'nature of the phenomenon' to be investigated, that there is no basis for aesthetic ideas except what people happen to have believed in the past and happen to believe now as a result. Dahlhaus himself seems quite happy with this solution; he was quite happy with the tradition as he received it, if not quite so happy with the direction it seemed to be going.

Despite Dahlhaus' carefully relativist language, it seems to me that from the evidence he himself presents one could make a case for a view of at least some aesthetic criteria as more permanent, more in the nature of things to be discovered as human possibilities for music than as the collective arbitrary whims of a culture. The notable success achieved by the application of the criteria of autonomous music and of twentieth century analytical techniques to music which was not written with such criteria in mind points in this direction. The music of J. S. Bach is the classic example of this. His music was written to fulfil expectations created by traditions of genre and of musical rhetoric, but it is eminently satisfying considered as if it had been written to be 'absolute' music. Dahlhaus himself notes

> Nor will an exclusively functional interpretation of a Bach cantata account for the historical fact — which no historian, however much inclined to favour antiquarian reconstructions, can afford to ignore — that Bach's works were not only amenable to reinterpretation in the nineteenth century to become the quintessence and paradigm of absolute music, but also, by virtue of this reinterpretation, attained an historical importance unimagined by Bach's eighteenth-century contemporaries (*Foundations*, p. 10).

It could perhaps be argued that music was becoming increasingly autonomous by Bach's time, as is attested by the complaints registered at the length and complexity of Bach's preludes in church. But the criteria of absolute music have been successfully applied to much earlier music, as for instance that of Josquin des Prez or Palestrina. Surely the enduring popularity of early music is not entirely due to their novelty value for ears

attuned to nineteenth century music![2] Dahlhaus admits that any criterion can be applied to any work, "In principle there is nothing that will not submit to one or other of these approaches..." (*Foundations*, p. 9). What governs the choice of which set of criteria to apply to a given work is a question of aesthetic and historical sensitivity, according to Dahlhaus. Some music, like pop music, is best judged according to its social function, for it has little to offer analysis as autonomous music. The arbiter in the end for Dahlhaus is cogency and coherence; the judgement that is the most complex, satisfying, and interesting it the most important. But the criteria never lose their applicability to any work. There is nothing intrinsically impossible, or even undesirable, in the application of old criteria, like those of genre or proportion or even beauty, to new music, just as it is not impossible or undesirable to apply new criteria to old music. The thing to keep in mind in such an application (and here I entirely agree with Dahlhaus) is that a work which fails miserably to meet one set of criteria may prove to be a brilliant success on the basis of another. Judgements of art must take into consideration a wide range of criteria, and the criteria which prove most relevant to a particular work will often be those of its own time. Just occasionally that may not be the case: is the music of, say, Rachmaninov best judged by the same criteria as Schoenberg? My point here is that criteria do not simply cease to exist, as other historical structures, like forms of government, do. The case in favour of regarding criteria as discovered possibilities of creation has still to be put; it is not my intention here to do so, merely to point out that Dahlhaus' demonstration of the historicity of aesthetics does not rule out such a case.

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[2] Though this novelty value is surely a factor: "the ideal of authentistic performance grew up alongside modernism, shares its tenets, and will probably decline alongside it as well. Historical verisimilitude, composer's intentions, original instruments, and all that, to the extent that they have a bearing on the question, have been not ends but means; and in most considerations of the issue they have been smoke-screens.... I am convinced that 'historical' performance today is not really historical; that a thin veneer of historicism clothes a performance style that is completely of our own time, and is in fact the most modern style around; and that the historical hardware has won its wide acceptance and above all its commercial viability precisely by virtue of its novelty, not its antiquity." Richard Taruskin, "The Pastness of the Present and the Presence of the Past," chapter 6 of *Authenticity and Early Music*, ed. by Nicholas Kenyon (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1988), p. 152.

The aspiring aesthetician might also take inspiration from Dahlhaus' expressed desire for a union of aesthetic and historical criteria. Such a merging could only arise, it seems to me, from a systematic insight into the nature of the musical phenomena – that is, into either the nature of humanity as inventor of music or into the nature of the possibilities for music inherent in the universe, or both. The theory of the Formalists, which Dahlhaus dismissed so reluctantly, is after all precisely a theory about the nature of art.

For the critic or anyone wishing to take up his challenge to formulate a theory of criticism, Dahlhaus leaves a similarly mixed legacy. He has taken crucial first steps. He encourages, by example, close scrutiny of critical terms all too often used carelessly. He offers hints of a structure of clusters of criteria which might be built into a model sufficiently dynamic to survive changes of fashion and aesthetic opinion. And he lists many criteria, particularly those not allied to beauty, which in my opinion deserve careful consideration in a comprehensive theory of criticism. However, Dahlhaus leaves the reader with a heavy burden of doubt that the thing can be done at all; the clues he leaves are so scattered and labyrinthine as to resist easy access and systematisation. Again, Dahlhaus' implicit reliance on tradition to ground criticism leaves the theorist hanging over the morass of relativism, searching for firm ground, especially in a time of rapid change, when as Dahlhaus admits musical consensus is likely to lag far behind musical events. Tradition and change must, certainly, be taken into account by theory, for they constitute fundamental aspects of musical life in any age, but some other grounding for possible criteria, from which each critic or each critical tradition selects those criteria which best apply to a given time and music, seems desirable, and as mentioned in the last paragraph, not impossible. One last, thorny problem remains with Dahlhaus' view of criticism: who is to judge the judges? Who determines which interpretations are and which are not adequate to the score? On what grounds are they to do this? These questions, potentially central to any theory of criticism, are left unadressed by Dahlhaus, though my suspicion is that he would have answered simply "Tradition!"

For the student of musicology, Dahlhaus clearly has most to offer, both in theory and practical example. His theory is sometimes clearer than his example, however. For example, there is some confusion in Dahlhaus' use of the 'ideal type.' J. Bradford Robinson, the translator of *Foundations* and of *Nineteenth-Century Music*, writes

> It soon became clear to me ... that Dahlhaus's "ideal types" fall basically into two quite distinct categories: historical concepts such as "romanticism" and "modernism," which are clearly heuristic constructs, and generalized formal schemata such as "sonata form" and "fugue," which are not just modern-day historiographical creations but also have long histories of their own in the practice and teaching of composition.
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> ... The crux of the matter is that Dahlhaus does not always distinguish clearly between, say, the "ideal type" of the sonata as a modern-day heuristic construct and the "sonata idea" which motivated many nineteenth-century composers....[3]

Dahlhaus applies the term 'ideal type' to two kinds of things: to the contructs of historians; and to the ideas held by historical figures. This is a weakness on Dahlhaus' part; even where they overlap, the two should be clearly distinguished, in the manner of Max Weber's distinction between 'valuations' and 'value relations.' Thus Dahlhaus demonstrates the pitfalls to be avoided as well as the advantages to be gained in using the 'ideal type' as a historiographical method. The 'ideal type' is of course not the only historiographic method demonstrated and discussed by Dahlhaus; *Foundations*, provides, at the very least, a large number of suggestions for the practice of historiography to be explored by the music historian.

The benefit of certain aspects of Dahlhaus' point of view for those pursuing music history and aesthetics in an English-speaking context is made clear by Kerman's[4] comments that, although the English word 'musicology' might be expected to cover all aspects of thinking about music, as does the German word *Musikwissenschaft*, in common usage 'musicology' refers only to music history in the narrowest sense, excluding music theory, musical aesthetics, and even music criticism. As we have seen, Dahlhaus'

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[3]"Comment and Chronicle," *19th Century Music* XIV (Autumn 1990): 217.

[4]Joseph Kerman, *Musicology*, p. 11.

conception of his task embraces and inter-relates all these areas, reflecting the much wider usage of *Musikwissenschaft*. To Kerman, as to all who find Dahlhaus' writing attractive, this broader perspective seems to be very much needed in English-speaking musicology, which is still, according to Kerman and to Taruskin,[5] dominated by a positivistic concept of itself as a discipline. This self-concept produced certain characteristic directions for post-war Anglophone musicology. Claude Palisca wrote a general summary of work in musicology in 1963 for a series of books on 'Humanistic Scholarship in America.' Kerman summarizes Palisca's findings thus:

> Under 'Notable Achievements' the reader of *Musicology* would have found one or two pages on biographies and general histories, a few more on dictionaries and monographs, and a great many more on 'Critical Texts.' He could hardly have been blamed for concluding that the main work of musicology consisted of bringing out editions — mostly of Renaissance music. To be sure, Palisca also listed 'Periodical Literature' as a major outlet for musicological work, without offering to survey this in the detail accorded to critical texts, problem by problem and field by field; and perhaps he was only running true to the form of his generation in not venturing an analysis of the periodical literature in terms of the *type* of work it represented, in terms of idea. The emphasis was heavily on fact. New manuscripts were discovered and described, archives were reported on, dates were established, *cantus firmi* traced from one work and one composer to another. Musicologists deal mainly in the verifiable, the objective, the uncontroversial, and the positive.
>
> The presentation of the texts of early music and of facts and figures about it, not their interpretation, was seen as musicology's most notable achievement. It is not only that a virtual blackout was imposed on critical interpretation — that is, the attempt to put the data that were collected to use for aesthetic appraisal or hermeneutics. Even historical interpretation was scanted.[6]

Dahlhaus' insistence that no historiographic decision is free of aesthetic and other subjective factors, that objectivity is only "a postulate more or less complied with" (*Analysis*, p. 5), strikes directly at the pretensions of positivistic music history. The connection by Dahlhaus of music history with criticism, his insistence that music history serves the present as commentator as well as memory, is also needed by English-speaking musicology (in the widest sense), for, according to Kerman, nobody in

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[5]Cf. Taruskin, *op.cit.* pp. 148-50, 198, 201-202.

[6]Kerman, op.cit. p. 42, describing Claude V. Palisca, 'American Scholarship in Westen Music,' in *Musicology*, by Harrison, Hood, and Palisca. (Englewood Cliffs, NJ: Prentice-Hall, 1963, pp. 87-214).

musicology (in the widest sense), for, according to Kerman, nobody in academia – except the journalists and the writers of programme notes – neither the music historians, nor the music analysts, has been willing to engage overtly in music criticism. That what music analysts do is in fact a kind of criticism, cloaked in specialist, often pseudo-mathematical, jargon, has been denied in the interest of maintaining a semblance of 'scientific' respectability. But serious criticism needs to be done, and done overtly; and Dahlhaus helps to show the theoretical underpinnings of what can be done.

At the same time that Dahlhaus broadens the field, he also insists on its professionalism and accuracy, especially as regards the use of terms that have long been taken for granted and used carelessly; words like 'realism' and 'romanticism', for instance. His emphasis on the heuristic quality of categories, types and labels, all so important to the historian's task, all too easily given a reality they never actually had, is also a challenge to sloppy thinking. Dahlhaus does not challenge positivism by loosening its careful way with facts; instead he extends that care to every aspect of historiography, including the hidden assumptions behind those facts. He calls for a historiography, and a criticism, well grounded in the particularity of the musical world; but a particularity that is and must be undergirded by an awareness of philosophy. This broadening and deepening of musicology, at least from the view-point of English-speaking musicology, can only be a good thing.

APPENDIX:

A list of the English and German titles and initial publication dates of the essays contained in *Schoenberg and the New Music*.

"Analytical instrumentation: Bach's six-part ricercar as orchestrated by Anton Webern": "Analytische Instrumentation — Bachs sechsstimmiges Ricercar in der Orchestrierung Anton Weberns," 1969.

"Avant garde and popularity": "Avantgarde und Popularität," 1975.

"Composition and improvisation": "Komposition und Improvisation," 1972

"Emancipation of the dissonance": "Emanzipation der Dissonanz," 1968.

"Expressive principle and orchestral polyphony in Schoenberg's *Erwartung*": "Ausdrucksprinzip und Orchesterpolyphonie in Schönbergs 'Erwartung,'" 1974.

"Form": "Form," 1966

"The fugue as prelude: Schoenberg's *Genesis* composition, Op. 44": "Die Fuge als Präludium: Zur Interpretation von Schönbergs Genesis-Komposition Opus 44," 1983.

"Musical prose": "Musikalische Prosa," 1964.

"The musical work of art as a subject of sociology": "Das musikalische Kunstwerk als Gegenstand der Soziologie," 1974.

"New Music and the problem of musical genre": "Die Neue Musik und das problem der musikalischen Gattungen," 1969.

"'New Music' as historical category": "'Neue Musik' als historische Kategorie,' 1969.

"'The Obbligato Recitative'": "'Das obligate Rezitativ,'" 1975.

"On the decline of the concept of the musical work": "Über den Zerfall des musikalischen Werkbegriffs," 1971.

"Plea for a Romantic category: the concept of the work of art in the newest music": "Plädoyer für eine romantische Kategorie — Der Begriff des Kunstwerks in der neuesten Musik," 1969.

"Problems of rhythm in the New Music": "Probleme des Rhythmus in der Neuen Musik," 1965.

"Progress and the avant garde": "Fortschritt und Avantgarde," 1966.

"A rejection of material thinking?": "Abkehr von Materialdenken?" 1984.

"Rhythmic structures in Webern's Orchestral Pieces Op. 6": "Rhythmische Strukturen in Weberns Orchesterstücken opus 6," 1972/3.

"Schoenberg and programme music": "Schönberg und die Programmusik," 1974.

"Schoenberg and Schenker": 1973.

"Schoenberg's aesthetic theology": "Schönbergs ästhetische Theologie," 1984.

"Schoenberg's late works": "Zum Spätwerk Arnold Schönbergs," 1983.

"Schoenberg's Orchestral Piece Op. 16, No. 3 and the concept of 'Klangfarbenmelodie'": "Schönbergs Orchesterstück op. 16, 3 und der Begriff der 'Klangfarbenmelodie,'" 1970.

"Schoenberg's poetics of music": "Schönbergs musikalische Poetik," 1976.

"Schreker and modernism: on the dramaturgy of *Der ferne Klang*": "Schreker und die Moderne — Zur Dramaturgie des 'Fernen Klang,'" 1978.

"Structure and expression in the music of Scriabin": "Struktur und Expression bei Alexander Skrjabin," 1972.

"Tonality: structure or process?": "Tonalität — Struktur oder prozess"

"What is 'developing variation'?": "Was heisst 'entwickelnde Variation'?" 1984.

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