

# Zeitschrift für Kritische Musikpädagogik (ZfKM)

Herausgegeben von  
Jürgen Vogt

In Verbindung mit  
Matthias Flämig, Anne Niessen, Christian Rolle

Kontaktadresse:  
<http://www.zfkm.org>

## Elektronischer Artikel

Pio, Frederik: The Heritage of the Musicality Discourse. A Genealogy of the Medical Concept of *Amusia*

<http://www.zfkm.org/07-pio.pdf>

© Frederik Pio, 2007, all rights reserved

Frederik Pio

## The Heritage of the Musicality Discourse: A Genealogy of the Medical Concept of *Amusia*

### I. Introduction

In my book *Birth of musicality* (Pio 2005) I have worked out an exposition of the emergence of the concept of *Musikalität* (musicality). The book is an attempt to describe the complex process in which the concept of *Musikalität* was constituted during the decades around 1900 in Germany. By doing so, the project tries to remedy a lack or a need to which Abel-Struth has called attention. In her music pedagogical *Grundriss* it is mentioned that a reflection upon the scholarly *concepts* of music pedagogy has partly been neglected to a certain extent (?):

”Die Musikpädagogik hat der Untersuchung ihrer Fachsprache bisher nicht viel Interesse geschenkt. Selbst in Phasen, in denen die Notwendigkeit musikpädagogischer Forschung erkannt wird, lässt sich kaum terminologisches Problembewusstsein erkennen“ (Abel-Struth 1985, 599-600).

Drawing attention to this fact opens up an important issue related to what Heidegger calls

”(...) [die] Nennkraft der Sprache / (...) denn die Worte und die Sprache sind keine Hülsen, worin die Dinge nur für den redenden und schreibenden Verkehr verpackt werden. Im Wort, in der Sprache werden und sind erst die Dinge“ (Heidegger 1953, 11).

Our designations and conceptualizations constitute an intervention in the world. When we designate, we locate things in the world; we install a given order into the world. However, in the way we designate ‘things’ and conceptualize ‘objects’ it is at the same time our being that pronounces itself. In other words, it is the way we *use* our objects, *ascribe value* to them, and thus *decide* upon their usefulness that is reflected in our language and its concepts:

”Die Grundworte, Grundsätze, Grundformen des Sprechens verweisen jeweils auf einen Ort, in den die Geschichte der Wahrheit sich gesammelt hat“ (Pöggeler 1963, 293).

It is the way we are present in the world that finds an expression in language. That is why Heidegger can say that it is within language that a given *in-der-Welt-sein* pronounces itself. With that

” (...) [muss] die Rede wesenhaft eine spezifisch *weltliche* Seinsart haben. Die befindliche Verständlichkeit des *in-der-Welt-seins* *spricht sich als Rede aus*. Das Bedeutungs ganze der Verständlichkeit *kommt zu Wort*“ (Heidegger 1927, 161).

For Heidegger it is about interpreting the words in which the coming into being of truth is gathered and condensed. The emergence of such concepts indicates a Heideggerian *Ereignis*. It means that such concepts have become points of crystallization for events that keep depositing significance long after they originally occurred. This suggests that such concepts are mere surface effects generated by much deeper and more encompassing transformations within the structures of our knowledge.

Here the emergence of *Musikalität* in the beginning of the 20th century constitutes an event from which we have not yet disengaged. Whether or not the concept of *Musikalität* could be interpreted in the light of such an *Ereignis* to a certain extent should, however, remain undecided - my esteem for Heidegger's work prompts me to abstain from putting this feather into my cap.

In this perspective, however, what our time inherits today are exactly the rationalities that originally conditioned the emergence of this concept. It is within such a comprehension that a possibility is opened for the musico-pedagogical research to go into the core concepts belonging to its *own* field of knowledge.

But why unfold this experiment in connection with precisely the concept of *Musikalität*? The answer to this has to do with the fact that conceptions of musicality have to do with almost all types of musico-pedagogical activity. It was Immanuel Kant who originally said that: "Der Mensch kann nur Mensch werden durch Erziehung" (Kant 1803, 699). For that reason, " (...) die Erziehung [ist] das grösste Problem, und das schwerste, was dem Menschen kann aufgegeben werden" (Kant 1803, 702).

I see no sign anywhere that the evaluation of the distinctly *musical* field of teaching and education should be somehow exempted from this Kantian theme. Also, musical man will become what he is, but solely on the condition that what he is, is moulded and shaped in a process of teaching and education. In other words, it is perfectly possible to challenge in a musico-pedagogical sense the stance of Kant by virtue of the *musicality* theme. By doing so we realize that our language, as mentioned, mirrors the way we are present in our world:

"Worte sind in der Geschichte oft mächtiger als Sachen und Taten" (Heidegger 1961, 403-404).

Heidegger opens up another important aspect of the musicality perspective, based on the fact that science, according to Heidegger, has become an existential condition for the human *Lebenswelt* in its entirety:

"'Wissenschaft' ist nicht lediglich ein Feld ‚kultureller‘ Betätigung unter anderen, sondern Wissenschaft ist eine Grundmacht in derjenigen Auseinandersetzung, kraft deren sich der abendländische Mensch überhaupt zum Seienden verhält und sich darin behauptet" (Op. cit., 444).

In continuation of this, one registers that the concept of *Musikalität* historically is a product of a *scientific* discourse. The concept is established within the framework of an explicit *scholarly* literature.

As the concept of *Musikalität* appears during the decades on both sides of the year 1900 this is as well surely connected with internal transformations within a singular *scientific* discipline, namely, the field of *Tonpsychologie*:

„Während das Adjektiv musikalisch bereits im 16. Jh. nachweisbar ist, scheint das Substantiv *Musikalität* erst deutlich später mit der Verwissenschaftlichung musikalischer und psychologischer Terminologie Ende des 19. bzw. Anfang des 20. Jh. gebräuchlich geworden zu sein”<sup>1</sup>

However, for a more scrupulous gaze it is hardly completely satisfactory to explain the emergence of the concept of *Musikalität* solely by the reversal of this concept back to transformations within the isolated field of *Tonpsychologie*. In other words, the changes within this closed field can hardly make up the definitive decisive factor for the emergence

---

<sup>1</sup> Steinberg 1994, 867. The two central figures implicitly referred here are respectively Carl Stumpf and Geza Revesz.

of this concept. For as we will see below, the above-mentioned emergence of the concept of *Musikalität* is tied up with a much wider horizon.

This indicates that several different fields of knowledge intersect or overlap each other within the musicality discourse. In my aforementioned book I have attempted to give a systematical exposition to a corner of this multiplicity. In other words, I have tried to point towards the rationalities which have had an effect in relation to the emergence of the concept of *Musikalität*.

Other alternatives could certainly have been accentuated, but at least four fields of knowledge seem to have asserted themselves when the concept of *Musikalität* is considered in a historical light:

- (i) the *Tonphysiologie* of natural science (the physiological basis for the knowledge of tones)
- (ii) the musicological *Stilgeschichte* or history of style (the pacesetting paradigm of historical musicology around the turn of the century)
- (iii) the field of medical knowledge disciplined by the concept of *amusia* (that is, the knowledge of radical unmusicality as a pathological phenomena)
- (iv) the music-related research of psychology

*In other words, the concept of 'Musikalität' appears to be disciplined by (i) natural science, (ii) music history, (iii) medicine and (iv) psychology.*

Below, I will exclusively dwell on the subject of (iii) medicine as a field of knowledge derived from the musicality discourse. Subsequently, I will suggest what challenges this complex of problems possibly could contain for a contemporary music pedagogy.

## II. The emergence of the concept of *amusia*

Towards the end of the 19th century the physician Billroth posed the question: *Wer ist musikalisch?* (Billroth 1895). This question is subsequently asked by another physician, von Kries, in a book dating from 1926 of the same title. These pieces of memorabilia seem to suggest that the earliest *systematic* attempts to address the subject of musical man were *medically* influenced, based on new departures within the neurological knowledge of *aphasia* from the 1880s.

Here the concept of *amusia* appears as a designation of a new category: *musical* aphasia. The emergence of this concept indicates that the field of aphasia (and its doctrine of cerebral localization of language disorders) now becomes the point of departure for the study of *musical* disturbances.

The earliest record of disruptions of musical functions within the pathological picture of aphasia can be found in Proust (1866). The case in question is about a patient who, in spite of being able to sing and perceive and play music, turns out to have become *note blind* (cf. Ustvedt 1937, 14). A similar case has been recorded by Finkelnburg (1870, 450). It is in continuation of these observations of musical ability that Kahler & Pick in 1879 adduce:

”Es gewinnt (...) immer mehr an Wahrscheinlichkeit, dass auch diese Form der Grosshirnfunction an das allgemeine Gesetz der Localisation gebunden ist” (Kahler & Pick 1878/79, 28).

In the last quarter of the 19th century the research community became aware of a number of clinical observations which gave rise to a certain wondering at the aphatical language

disruptions and their relationship to the ability to sing and the sense of pitch (cf. Frankl-Hochwart 1891, 284). Bouillaud (1865) – as well as Falret in the *Dictionnaire encyclopédique des sciences médicales* (1876) – draw attention to the fact that a complete loss of motor language ability does not necessarily take away the ability to reproduce sung melodies. Another variation of this realization is contained in a similar fact that becomes apparent at this time: the loss of the ability to understand language does not necessarily determine the perception of melodies (cf. Oppenheim 1886, 363). What is recognized here is what later became known as the „ (...) bei den Aphasikern so oft erhaltene Musikverständniss“ (Pötzl 1939, 191).

Thus, the aphatical picture of symptoms does not necessarily include a loss of *musical* abilities; this dividing differentiation paradoxically becomes the occasion for a unifying gesture. It is no longer impossible to subsume musical behaviour under the auspices of aphasia studies (of language disorder) belonging to a clinical pathology.

The community realizes that there is no proof of any complete parallelism between *language wise* and *musical* disruptions of behaviour. It is this realization that opens up the possibility that the study of musical ability and behaviour can become the key to a more multi-faceted and differentiated understanding of the aphatical language disruptions. It is under this circumstance that the study of amusia becomes of „(...) besonderem psychophysiologischen und pathologischen Interesse“ (Donath 1901, 936).

When the aphasia researchers „(...) auf pathologischem Gebiete (...)“ around the turn of the century gathered around the case studies of amusia, it was certainly not out of a propensity for music *per se*.<sup>2</sup> Instead, this musical interest is of course based on an endeavour to:

„ (...) die klinische Lehre von der Aphasie, die jetzt an einem gewissen toten Punkte angelangt ist, über diesen hinaus zu bringen“ (Pick 1906, 91).

Thus, in the beginning, the amusia studies were helpful auxiliary tools under the auspices of aphasia. The main assumption was the possibility to demonstrate that a number of singular factors:

„ (...) wie in der Amusie, auch in den Störungen der Sprache sich nachweisen lassen und dass deren Studium für eine Vertiefung des klinischen Verständnisses der Aphasieformen verwertbar ist (Op. cit., 88)

The emergence of a *musical pathology* (within the western history of science) is thus marked by the moment when it is realized (by Knoblauch and Oppenheim, among others) that there is no direct and linear relation between music and language. The pathology of aphasia then directs its clinical gaze towards the question of musical ability, and it is gradually discovered that the symptoms of this newly established musical pathology are just as numerous and complex as the study of the aphatical language disorders.

In the last two decades of the 19th century the centre of gravity of amusia research moves to a certain extent from France and England towards Germany. Even though the aphasia research in Germany (beginning during the 1870s; cf. Jacyna 2000, 86) makes its breakthrough (as the *Lieblingsgegenstand* of medical research) towards the turn of the century, Oppenheim found in 1886 only a very modest number of aphasia cases where the musical ability had not been neglected or completely omitted (cf. Oppenheim 1886, 345).

---

<sup>2</sup> Also in Agadschanianz (1914, 276) it is in connection with unclarified questions inherent in the aphasia knowledge „...über die Lokalisation der Redefunktionen...“ that the interest of the musical disruptions is motivated.

In 1886 Oppenheim followed up on the original observations of Falret and Bouillaud. On the basis of a systematically composed treatise, Oppenheim ‘goes whole hog’ by effecting in principle for the first time a differentiation between *musical* aphasia and *language* (regular) aphasia. This provides the background for Knoblauch, who in 1888 (two years after Oppenheim) formulates the concept of *amusia* as the actual and positive object of musical aphasia.<sup>3</sup>

Here amusia becomes identified as the disruption of vocal or instrumental ability (that is, exclusively with reference to *motor* ability). Three years after, Wallaschek (1891, 62) expanded the amusia concept to comprise all types of pathological disturbance of musical ability (motor as well as sensory ability).

### III. The opening and closing of musical talent

The question is now to what extent this field of musical aphasia could be regarded as a condition for the later emergence of the concept of *Musikalität* around 1913 (cf. Revesz 1913) as opposed to the amusia concept of aphasia. Below, we shall return to the principal nature of this conceptual ‘pair’ of *Musikalität* and *Amusie* (amusia), whose inner coherence is associated with the fact that it is within the aphasia field that motor and sensory musical abilities are systematized and arranged under a general *amusia* problem (i.e. as *lost* musical abilities). It is the knowledge of *this systematization* that can (with inverted denominators) be implemented by virtue of the examination of musical *talent*.

Thus, Pick sees against a background of musical parameters concerning tone quality, intensity, timbre and rhythm “(...) das Vorkommen von Störungen dieser einzelnen Faktoren im Bereiche der Amusie erweisen” (Pick 1906, 88).

By locating the *disruption* of musical functions one is at the same time in the process of pointing out where the musical functions are placed in a cerebral sense. The amusia study

„ (...) lehrt uns die verschiedenen *in den Musiksinne eingehenden Momente* erkennen, voneinander zu trennen und zu verwerthen, die Verhältnisse dieser Momente zueinander zu bestimmen und endlich die Folgezustände der Störungen kennen zu lernen” (Henschen 1920, 140, (my accentuation)).

In this theoretical paradigm at the turn of the century the demand of *cerebral localization* is doxa. In other words, one seeks

” (...) aus dem *Ausfall* der Funktion und dem pathologisch-anatomischen Befund Rückschlüsse auf die *Lokalisation der Funktion* in bestimmten Zentren des Gehirnes zu ziehen” (Walthard 1927, 299)

This way of thinking prompts that a given musical function or ability must be discerned on the assumption that it belongs to *the lack* or *the loss* of this identical ability. In this way one can then realize ” (...) wo die musikalische Begabung anfängt und wo sie aufhört (...)” (Wallaschek 1894, 28). It is also on the background of an enumeration of the musical aphasic disruptions (concerning the perception of timbre, singing and musical memory) that it becomes clear how this pathology opens up for a better understanding of the relation between man and music:

”Die obigen Tatsachen erlauben uns in mannigfacher Weise einen tieferen Einblick in das Mechanismus der Musik und des Musiksinnes, sowie der Auffassung von Tönen und Melodien” (Henschen 1920, 146).

<sup>3</sup> Knoblauch 1888, 15. This concerns a bifurcation of amusia as the sensory dimension is designated *Tontaubheit* and the motor dimension is designated *Amusie*.

With that, the notion of a *Musikzentrum* (op. cit., 155) – which belongs to the aphasic endeavour of cerebral localization – is connected to the idea of a latent deficiency in terms of a loss of this musical center. Likewise, in Jentsch it is "(...) auf Grund pathologischer Beobachtungen" that one is pointing towards "(...) der linken zweiten Stirnwindung (...) als *Zentrum der Gesangstüchtigkeit ...*" (Jentsch 1919, 266). This is the inheritance from the pathology of aphasia:

"In der zweiten Frontalwindung (...) [hat man] das Zentrum für die Gesangstüchtigkeit lokalisieren wollen. Pathologische Beobachtungen mehrerer Autoren scheinen (...) dafür zu sprechen" (Auerbach 1911, 7).

The endeavours of aphasia to perform a cerebral localization of motor and sensory linguistic abilities is – so to speak – copying itself, as it is transferred *into a musical pathology*. This happens when the amusia concept is established under the auspices of the pathology of aphasia. In this way, the field of pathology partly becomes a constituent for the modern narrative of musical man. In other words, the pathologized concept of amusia enters into an alliance with a normalized concept of *Musikalität* belonging to tone psychology.

The differentiation of the different forms of aphasia can – applied to the amusia problem – be shown to furnish the parameters later systematized through the different determinations of musical giftedness. Thus it is said in 1901 that

" (...) wir müssen für den Musiksinne ein Gehirncentrum verlangen, d. h. eine Stelle oder Stellen der Gehirnrinde, deren Dasein die Bedingung des Musiksinnes ist und deren Entwicklung der des Musiksinnes proportional ist" (Möbius 1901, 210).

Already in 1886 – during the process of constituting amusia – Oppenheim touches upon this subject (cf. Kast 1885, 627). At this time the relation of amusia to pathological conditions in the brain remains an unanswered question:

"Die Beantwortung ist zunächst deshalb eine schwierige, weil *die musikalische Begabung* ja so überaus ungleichmässig bei dem verschiedenen Individuen entwickelt ist und wir, um zu verwerthbaren Resultaten zu kommen, eine genaue Kundschaft von dem Umfang dieser Fähigkeiten vor der Erkrankung haben müssten" (Oppenheim 1886, 367, (my accentuation)).

It is by pointing towards a cerebral centre which attends to the *normal* exertion of an ability that the *pathological* variant can be exposed. Thus it is in Schüssler's localization that the "(...) musikalischen *oder* unmusikalischen Veranlagung" is decided as the primary matter of importance "(...) in der besonderen Gestaltung der 1. Schläfenwindung (...) " (Schüssler 1916, 164 (my accentuation)).

The condition produced by this rationality implies that an unmusical phenomenon becomes pathologized. With that a legitimacy in principle becomes evident "(...) in dem falschen Singen (...) nicht mehr eine in die physiologische Variationsbreite fallende Erscheinung, sondern eine pathologische Abnormität zu erblicken (...)" (Brunner 1922, 55 (my accentuation)).

#### IV. Normalization and pathologization

In the decades around the turn of the century the field of knowledge belonging to amusia was characterized by a compounded and diffuse pathological picture. A mix of neurology and psychiatry mingled with different musical idiosyncracies contributed to the overall impression of a flighty clinical practice.

After 1920 a displacement occurred in the amusia field. The field began to be guided by a more *psychologizing* horizon (of psychology). The amusia field thereby distanced itself from

the old localizationist hypothesis of aphasia. This is a consequence of the fact that three decades of the research of musical aphasia at this time (1920) had not yet yielded any noteworthy results. A new category was highlighted: ‘*pure amusia*’.

This category designates a specifically *musical* pathology, which breaks away from the theoretical foundations of aphasia to become an independent and specifically *musical* disease. This turn is marked by the huge monograph *Amusie* by Feuchtwanger, published in 1930.

This pulling away from aphasia at the same time meant forming an alliance with *Musikalität*.

As mentioned previously, these two concepts gradually assume the character of a ‘pair’. Modern man with his *Musikalität* is now shadow boxing with a pathology that pins down the negative reflection of himself (in terms of *Amusie*):

„*Amusie und Musikalität*. Unsere Problemstellungen hatten zur Besprechung des Einflusses geführt, den die Erfahrungen am pathologischen Falle für die allgemeine Theorie der Gestaltung des Musikstoffes haben. Sie weisen darüber hinaus auf das spezielle gebiet der individuellen musikalischen Begabung, der musikalischen Dispositionen, der *Musikalität*“ (Feuchtwanger 1930, 283).

Through the alliance at this time with *Musikalität* the pathology of amusia seems to have a score to settle with contemporary art music. In this process a number of musical efforts and phenomena become bundled together under the designation of this pathology of amusia, that is, as something that is unmusical to a sickly extent (cf. Pio 2005, 228-256). This move is created out of a symmetrical coherence with the determination of *Musikalität* as based on the notion of a musical *normality* (cf. Vogt 2001, 224-231):

„Die Arbeit, die Hilfeleistung des Arztes, der künstlerisches Können und Einfühlung besitzt, kann gewiss nicht hoch genug eingeschätzt werden *im Kampf für normale musikantische Berufleistung*“ (Singer 1927, 112 (my accentuation)).

This lies in a seamless continuation of the assumption that „Musikalität (...) *normalerweise* bei jedem Menschen vorhanden [ist]“ (Vidor 1931, 47 (my accentuation)).

Thus, it must „(...) durch exakte Untersuchungen für jede einzelne Fähigkeit *das Normalmass* festgestellt werden (...)“ (König 1928, 400 (my accentuation)). This should be done with special reference to whether one „(...) musikalisch normal veranlagt ist (...)“ (Miller 1925, 192). In that way Nadel is brought to his result:

„(...) die Folgerung nämlich, dass dann eigentlich der normale Mensch an sich musikalisch sein müsste“. With that „ (...) verfechte ich den Satz: der normale Mensch ist musikalisch“.<sup>4</sup>

The pathologization of amusia in principle sets in when a permanent situation characterized by normal manners of function is suddenly concerned with a change. The explicit setting out of this process underlines that one cannot completely exclude that normal manners of musical function suddenly could ‘take the wrong road’ so to speak. This means that a desirable state of affairs potentially could be disputed or affected by a non-desirable level of functioning. A pathologized amusia thus contrasts with a normalized *Musikalität*, thereby constantly reminding musical man that his musical salubrity potentially could change its ground (and become marked by amusia features).

With that the immediacy and innocence of musical man seems lost. This should be grasped in that way that all that is musically erroneous is something that constantly should

---

<sup>4</sup> Nadel 1928, 41. Here one can point towards a figure like Jacoby who claims – in the 1920s – that Music Education should attempt to *oppose* these tendencies of normalization, cf. Jacoby 1926/27, 115.



be expelled in a gesture where a musical normality is regained and consolidated. All the time the musical normality is concerned with its own fateful *or* exulting possibilities in time. Thus, it is by virtue of the rejection of the musically abnormal that musical man contends his musical normality.<sup>5</sup>

The *Musikalität* of modern man justifies itself in an endless account with *Amusie* as a slightly unhealthy state that constantly threatens to more or less terminate the regime of musical normality. By virtue of the pathologization of unmusical features one can now talk about *mild* amusia. In other words, this pathology is dosed when the state of affairs is merely *somewhat* pathological. Thus it is said

”(...) dass ein vollständiger Mangel an musikalischen Dispositionen eine Seltenheit ist, dass sie aber sehr stark variieren und dass sie bei einer Reihe von Individuen *sehr bescheiden sein können*“ (Ustvedt 1937, 121 (my accentuation)).

## V. Musico-pedagogical perspectives

### *A secure and unambiguous reality*

We are referred by this musical pathology to its unified and contrasting notion of *Homo-Musicus*: modern, normalized, musical man. At the beginning of the 1920s the amusia problem originating from medicine thus was established as a fundamental precondition for the understanding and determination of musical man. In other words, medicine has become part of that grid of knowledge through which he becomes discernible. In this context it is quite significant that it was not until 1963 that the amusia field of knowledge was charted in a comprehensive bibliography.<sup>6</sup>

According to a perspective that underlines what is distinctly *different* and what is *dissimilar*, opposites would be able to be mediated and transmitted *to* each other, allowing a *circular exchange* that creates a space for new thinking and for different intensities. But instead of permitting distinct intensities to be differentiated between, the knowledge of amusia institutes a rationality relying on the belief that the world can be described in terms of conceptual pairs of *opposites*. The basic *will to divide* of amusia, which separates our musical *Lebenswelt* into one sphere which is pathologized as opposed to another sphere which is normalized, carries with it a vehemence or perhaps even a violence. Why?

Because the unified symmetry that carries the alliance between *Musikalität* and *Amusie* occasions an unequivocal assertion: that the musical reality in which we live is to be grasped as an *unambiguous* reality. What is ever so discreetly repressed here is the preference to be present in the world (and its musical life) under the sign of versatility and many-sidedness.

To be more explicit it seems that the rationality described above has contributed to a conception of musical man that must dispute and challenge types of musical normativity expressed in, for example, 12-tone composition, serialism, aleatorical music, free jazz, and electronically generated music.

---

<sup>5</sup> It is here that „*die Grosse Gesundheit*“ becomes „... eine solche, welche man nicht nur hat, sondern auch beständig noch erwirbt und erwerben muss, weil man sie immer wieder preisgiebt, preisgeben muss!“. Nietzsche (KSA), Bd. 3, p. 636.

<sup>6</sup> Thus Wellek claims to be the first one compiling a comprehensive bibliografi charting this field (cf. Wellek: 1963, p. 118). With that he apparently chooses to neglect Ustvedts less exhaustive bibliography, (cf. Ustvedts. 1937, p. 732f).

What is suggested here is that a number of significant thoughts which have the fact in common that they have tried to do something *new* with music, have become demarcated or deselected by a technology of normalization with a propensity to pathologize whatever is found *outside* itself.

For instance, Karl-Heinz Stockhausen became a target for attacks during the 1960s brought into action by the musico-pedagogical field among others (cf. Dahlhaus et al. 1982, 9). It is also illustrative that the composer Arnold Schönberg – who opened the path Stockhausen was later to follow – apparently claims that the term *atonal* music is originally derived from the medical adjective *amusisch*, which of course stems from the nomenclature of the amusia field (cf. Pio 2005, 246).

The fact that modern pathology – by virtue of the amusia field – has become a part of the horizon belonging to modern musical man is possible because we, in the epoch we live in, want to know the truth about the shortcomings of the musical constitution of the individual. But the basic problem remains that *this sheer attempt* to furnish the subject with a musical pathology as opposed to a musical normality *appears as unmusical itself*. The fundamental value of this attempt seems rather limited. This limited value becomes evident in relation to life-confirming musical thinking that is in solidarity with the endeavour to perceive and realize music and all its works.

Perhaps an acknowledgement of this insight could prepare the ground for a secession of the musical forms of pathology *from the hegemony* of medicine. Medicine is not the only field of knowledge that deals with life and its processes; there is another significant field to be mentioned here: namely, *pedagogy*.

#### *The decay of Heidegger's 'Welt'*

A music pedagogical reflection, inspired by this historical perspective, could be about having at one's disposal possible ways to act that turn away from this thinking 'in terms of opposites' and the type of comprehension of the world which is produced by it.

It is an ingrained characteristic of western mentality that the point of departure is always a fundamental distinction between an *essence* and a *surface*. The exchange between these two levels is controlled by the principle of representation. An acceptance of this circumstance is automatically a way of saying yes to all the other derived variants of this dichotomy.

Thus we live within a horizon constituted upon all the classical pairs of opposites which have taken root in our western cultural sphere (for instance: inside/outside, normal/pathological, subject/object, surface/essence, good/bad, etc.).

This circumstance is so ingrained in our being that it is an extremely difficult task to turn away from this unified logic of oppositions to think something else or in a different way. The concept of *Musikalität* that constituted itself in the beginning of the 20th century is in many ways a conceptual junction - or a musical hinge - for an intensification of this rationality.

A consideration of the extent to which musical man falls apart into such oppositions today, could remind us to think about whether music pedagogy has any option to do something different than automatically continuing in accordance with such a narrative.

We should decide our attitude to this question because this is a way to counter the threat that the notion of musical man will become suspended under the auspices of diversity and multiplicity. If that happens we will find *either* individuals with a healthy musicality *or* individuals marked by the void that a lacking musicality has left behind. Musical life will thereby fall apart.

The work of Heidegger is a large-scale undertaking to pull away from western metaphysics as the great maker of opposites. Future research along this path could, for instance, attempt to inscribe the Heideggerian category *Welt* into musico-pedagogical reflection (cf. Heidegger 1927, §§ 12-18).

The above contribution to the genealogy of the modern *Musikalität* (musicality) has also pointed towards the fact that, more precisely, it seems to be our musical *Lebenswelt* that falls into decay under the hegemony of an *objectivized* concept of musicality. Heidegger's biographer Safranski in principle draws attention to this: "Die objektive Einstellung *entlebt* das Erleben und *entweltet* die uns begegnende Welt" (Safranski 1994, 170).

A kindred outlook also emerges within music pedagogy. Thus it is said in Vogt's *Der schwankende Boden der Lebenswelt*:

"Die Lebenswelt erweist sich (...) keineswegs als der sichere Boden, an und auf dem Musikpädagogik einen festen Halt finde könnte" (Vogt 2001, 232).

In this perspective the status of our *Musikalität* (as an examinable object) draws with it a specific horizon of thought: a horizon we should reconsider in the light of the fact that our *Erziehung* becomes *weltlos* when our sense of being in the world falls into decay.

This oblivion is partly connected with the above-mentioned 'rationality of opposites', which – inscribed within the modern concept of *Musikalität* – roots itself in the notion of the subject standing as an independent and autonomous kernel opposite the world; not as a being present *in* the world, but expressing a subject stance taken *opposite* the world.

A way to deal with this problem of how to decide upon the musical self could be to consider *Bildung* as a perhaps more acceptable line of thought compared to a psychologized concept of musicality. According to Vogt, it is also a matter of expressing the concept of *Bildung* anew. In other words, it is a question of "(...) eine Neuformulierung der Abschied nimmt vom Subjekt als autonomen Zentrum der Welt (...)" (op. cit., 235).

### *Musicality-Bildung*

Heidegger's perspective invites us to conceive of the musical subject as not necessarily having a substantial, inner core. Rather, the self is something that occurs within relations where it is displaced in the sphere *between* what is individual and what belongs to the social world of everyday life. In this perspective there seems to be no autonomous, point-like self. We are always entangled *in* the world as a being that can only decide upon itself by virtue of the social relations and the overall context of significance within which we find ourselves. It is within this field of tension - between what belongs to the subject's *own*, secure horizon and what is outside and *unfamiliar* – that "(...) die fragile Eigenheit des gebildeten Subjekts jeweils erst *entsteht*" (op. cit., 250). As Nietzsche puts it, it is under this perspective that musical man must be decided upon:

"'Ein Mensch von bestimmter Beschaffenheit' (...) - das ist Unsinn, denn nur in lauter Relationen *hat* er überhaupt eine Beschaffenheit" (KSA 11, 185 (N)).

For new situations, we need new words. I propose, therefore, a new category: *musicality-Bildung*.

In the first half of the 20th century the tonepsychological concept of musicality – and the amusia concept of medicine – mutually corroborated the same rigid deadlock of musical oppositions. From the point of view of music pedagogy, the idea is that today we should dissociate ourselves from this old dependence on psychology (and its twin:

medicine). This move obviously calls for an *alternative* to the psychologized musicality concept (and its genealogical birth in medicine).

In other words: this is an invitation that remains a possibility in our current situation. It is about coming up with a new name that can designate a pedagogical working process, that pulls teaching-related thinking and acting away from psychology as the *only* referent. For when modern music pedagogy attempts to learn from Heidegger's *Denkwege* (pathways of thought) the *psychologized* subject does not remain an intact, inner unity.

The *psychologized* perspective of 'musicality' takes off from an individualized dimension of the subject. What is lost here is the thought of *Bildung* together with its insight that the individual necessarily is referred to a process of shaping and moulding itself, in order to settle an age-old account with something that is greater and more overarching than the isolated individual itself. In other words, *Bildung* is still about the subject going *beyond* what is purely individual, towards what is more general and by virtue of this generality connected with a *social dimension*. *Bildung* is about a process in which self and sociality appear simultaneously. As mentioned, *Bildung* belongs to an experience of entangledness *with* the world (not a stance taken opposite the world). But *Bildung* is also about an obligation to a consciousness of tradition that exceeds the subjective stance of the individual.

With the project of *Bildung*, however, we run the risk of ending up in a purely tradition-bound approach, directed only towards the *past*. In that way, our gaze becomes dominated only by what was *once* new. A purely classical *Bildung* is thereby reproduced, which becomes colour-blind to the new and interesting tendencies that are perhaps in the process of leaving their lasting mark on the contemporary age.

*Thus, neither the psychologized concept of musicality alone, nor the project of Bildung alone seems to be able to solve our problems for the time being.*

'*Bildung*' prompts us to become what we are under the sign of a human *generality*. 'Musicality', on the other hand, is always about determining an *individualized* level of attainment. The category of musicality-*Bildung* does not confirm either of these two isolated notions.

It is just as impossible to reduce musical man to an autonomous and individualized *Ich*, as it is to reduce musical man to a collective, generalized *Gemeinschaft*. Heidegger indicates this experience when he describes our being in the world in this way:

"Die Selbstheit besagt nicht, er sei in erster Linie ein 'Ich' und ein Einzelner. Er ist dies so wenig wie ein Wir und eine Gemeinschaft" (Heidegger 1953, 110).

So *musicality-Bildung* is a process directed by the attempt to act upon a balanced relationship between these two contrasts. This means that *the unity of the musical self* - i.e. the attempt to determine musical man - *for the time being must be decided with reference to another level than that of psychology*. Here, the Heideggerian *phenomenology of being* seems to be a promising point of departure.

With that the category of '*musical life*' emerges as a vital, contemporary referent for music pedagogy in general (cf. Pio 2005, 385f.). This should be understood in that way that musicality-*Bildung* is about the process of relating the 'musicality' of the *individual* to the *sociality* of the 'musical life'. In other words the process of musicality-*Bildung* is based on a reflected relation between the individual (the psychological level of 'musicality') and musical life (the social dimension of *Bildung*). *In other words, this move towards musicality-Bildung is about*

*suspending the absolute distance between these two dimensions, in order to be able to comprehend them within a mutual and reciprocal reference so that a unity can appear on a new level.*<sup>7</sup>

With ‘musicality’, tone psychology has established a technical examinable object instituted in a symmetry with the amusia object of medicine. With the process of musicality-Bildung – and the directedness of this process towards musical life – we want to outline a more pedagogical and social dimension of music; a dimension containing a sheer complexity that tends towards exposing the quantifiable musicality object as inappropriate. In spite of this we are not completely encapsulating ourselves solely within a concept of Bildung. The theme of musicality remains present by virtue of the focus on how to be present in relation to the music. This means questioning the *musical experience*.<sup>8</sup>

Musicality-Bildung is not about objectivizing an isolated centre within musical man. Off course there *is* a center, - but the point remains that this center is not there *before* any involvement in the contexts within which we find ourselves. The self is constantly coming into existence. The musical self is not a static structure; nor is it something that simply changes independently and at random. It is *in between* these two poles that the self transforms what it is in a slow and inert process. Freud’s psychoanalysis has reflected on this notion of the self in a very precise manner.<sup>9</sup>

In other words, psychoanalysis has in principle contributed to a clarification of this process of change that throws light on the self as *neither static nor* freely changing. Thus the concept of the self, inherent in the process of musicality-Bildung, borrows from both Heideggers phenomenology and from psychoanalysis. The sheer space – in which the musical experience of the self is amassed – is thereby displaced.

To sum up, we can say that the representation of opposites – installed by virtue of the historical alliance between the concepts of ‘musicality’ and ‘amusia’ – is reflected in the musical procedures of normalization and pathologization. We are thus dealing with a potential loss of *Welt*, loss of *context* and loss of *coherence*. In a *musical* sense we summarize this tripartite loss as *loss of ‘musical life’*. This loss of musical life is the end product brought about by this rationality of opposites. More precisely, one can say that what we designate as a ‘rationality of opposites’ is reinforced by (i) the *quantifying* approach, (ii) the *individualizing* approach and (iii) the dimension of ‘scientification’ (*Verwissenschaftlichung*) that accompanies (i) and (ii).

Symptomatic of the fact that (i), (ii) and (iii) constitute three sides of the same matter, they also make up component parts of the horizon of knowledge in which the concept of ‘musicality’ was originally installed at the beginning of the 20th century. We are therefore dealing with a diagnosis which claims that an unrestrained ‘scientification’ (*Verwissenschaftlichung*) of musical man will result in a decline.

This is symptomatic of the fact that the concept of *Musikalität* (at the time of its appearance around 1913) pulls away from the themes inherent in the tradition of Bildung, i.e. themes oriented towards questions of taste, sociality, and the gradual and temporal shaping of experience.

As a countermove to this still dominant trend of *Musikalität*, an invitation thus stands open to consider a further elaboration of the concept of musicality-Bildung. We are not

---

<sup>7</sup> The point of departure for the process of musicality-Bildung has been outlined in section C of my thesis *Birth of musicality*, op. cit, 347f.

<sup>8</sup> Cf. my unpublished paper presented at the 2007 network-conference for *Nordic Research in Music Education* in Helsinki.

<sup>9</sup> Cf. my article *Socialanalytik mellem psykoanalyse og generaliseret fysiologi* in ‘KLAG conference proceedings’ (in press).

abandoning the musicality theme, but merely insisting that the dimension of Bildung should be revitalized if a contemporary, musico-pedagogical gaze is to discover something *new* in musical man that corresponds to our *current* time.

At the same time such a move is constructive by virtue of the fact that it opposes the risk that musical experience goes astray in an immoderate, psychologized individualization. The essential being of the musical experience is found *beyond* that which is private, individualized and psychologized.

In other words: what is *discouraged* in the process of musicality-Bildung is the trend of *decay* through which educative upbringing with reference to musical life is hampered or impeded. On the contrary, such an upbringing with reference to musical life should be the *superior objective* for any process of musicality-Bildung. This objective will at the same time – from the immeasurable depth of the musical experience – encourage a *profession of identity* among the scholarly people undertaking this huge calling. Music teacher education is thus placed under a new light.

It is about taking care of a unified whole in which the individual can step forward as part of a coherent context that goes beyond what this individual is in itself. That is why musicality-Bildung should have a breadth of view originating in what Nietzsche called *Gesamtwertung* (KSA, 12, 210 (N)). This contains

„(...) eine Verurtheilung des gesammten Gangs der Dinge. Denn in ihm giebt es nichts Isolirtes: das Kleinste trägt das Ganze (...)“ (KSA, 12, 316 (N)).

What must be facilitated for this perspective is a musical life in which it is asked: *which options will be of greatest value in the future?* In continuation of this one could say that a future music pedagogy should be based on the notion of a musical experience where a diversity and multiplicity rather than confirming binary, oppositional codes of significance are construed both in the self (as an effect of the musical life) and in the musical life (as an effect of the self). If anywhere, it must be deep in the critical work of musical life upon itself – i.e. in the experiment with new musical values – that we can discern in the distance the possible musical displacement of the self which perhaps can take modern musical man beyond his frozen musicality.

## Bibliography

### (i) Historical sources (register of quoted texts):

- Agadschanianz, K. (1914): "Über die Beziehung der Sprechfunktion zur Intonation, zum Ton und Rhythmus", in: Neurologisches Zentralblatt, 33, p. 274-287
- Auerbach, S. (1911): "Zur Lokalisation des musikalischen Talentes im Gehirn und am Schädel", in: Archiv für Anatomie und Physiologie – Anatomische Abteilung, p. 1-10
- Billroth, Th. (1895): Wer ist musikalisch?, Berlin: Gebrüder Paetel
- Brunner, H. (1922): „Klinische Beiträge zur Frage der Amusie“ in: Archiv für Ohren-, Nasen- und Kehlkopfheilkunde, 109, p. 47-62
- Donath, J. (1901): „Beiträge zur Lehre von der Amusie, nebst einem Falle von instrumentaler Amusie bei beginnender progressiver Paralyse“, in: Wiener klinische Wochenschrift, 40, p. 935-939
- Finkelnburg (1870): „Niederrheinische Gesellschaft in Bonn. Medicinische Section“, in Berliner klinische Wochenschrift, 37/38, p. 449-450, 460-462
- Feuchtwanger, E. (1930): Amusie, Berlin: Verlag von Julius Springer
- Frankl-Hochwart, L. (1891): „Über den Verlust des musikalischen Ausdrucksvermögens“, in: Deutsche Zeitschrift für Nervenheilkunde, 1, p. 283-299

- Henschen, S. E. (1920): „Über Aphasie, Amusie und Akalkulie“, in: Klinische und anatomische Beiträge zur Pathologie des Gehirns - fünfter Teil, Stockholm, p. 42-178
- Jacoby, Heinrich. (1926/27): „Muss es Unmusikalische geben?“, in: Zeitschrift für psychoanalytische Pädagogik, 1, p. 33-38, 110-119
- Jentsch, E. (1919): „Die Lokalisation der musikalischen Anlagen am Schädel“, in: Zeitschrift für die gesamte Neurologie und Psychiatrie, 48, p. 263-293
- Kahler, O. & Pick, A. (1878/79): „Ein Fall von Worttaubheit“, in: Vierteljahrsschrift für die praktische Heilkunde, 141, p. 24-31
- Kast, A. (1885): „Ueber Störungen des Gesangs und des musikalischen Gehörs bei Aphasischen“, in: Münchener medicinischer Wochenschrift, 44, p. 624-627
- Knoblauch, A. (1888): „Ueber Störungen der musikalischen Leistungsfähigkeit in Folge von Gehirnläsionen“, in: Deutsches Archiv für klinische Medizin, 43, p. 1-24
- Kries, J. v. (1926): Wer ist musikalisch?, Berlin: Verlag von Julius Springer
- König, H. (1928): „Über das musikalische Gedächtnis“, in: Zeitschrift für Psychologie, 108, p. 398-420
- Miller, R. (1925): „Über musikalische Begabung und ihre Beziehung zu sonstigen Anlagen“, in: Zeitschrift für Psychologie, 97, p. 191-214
- Möbius, P. J. (1901): Über Kunst und Künstler, Leipzig
- Nadel, S. (1928): „Zum Begriff der Musikalität“, in: Zeitschrift für Musikwissenschaft, Oktober, p. 23-42
- Oppenheim, H. (1886): „Ueber das Verhalten der musikalischen Ausdrucksbewegungen und musikalisches Verständnis bei Aphasischen“, in: Charité Annalen, 13, p. 345-383
- Pick, A. (1906): „Zur Analyse der Elemente der Amusie und deren Vorkommen im Rahmen aphasischer Störungen“, in: Monatsschrift für Neurologie und Psychiatrie, 18, p. 87-96
- Pötzl, O. (1939): „Zur Pathologie der Amusie“, in: Zeitschrift für die gesamte Neurologie und Psychiatrie, 165, p. 187-194
- Revesz, G. (1913): Zur Grundlegung der Tonpsychologie, Leipzig: Verlag von Veit & Comp
- Schüssler, H. (1916): „Das unmusikalische Kind. Ein Beitrag zur Psychologie der Begabung“, in: Zeitschrift für angewandte Psychologie, 11, p. 136-166
- Singer, K. (1927): Berufskrankheiten der Musiker, Berlin
- Ustvedt, H. J. (1937): „Ueber die Untersuchung der musikalischen Funktionen bei Patienten mit Aphasie“, in: Acta medica Scandinavica, 86, Supplementum
- Vidor, M. (1931): Was ist Musikalität?, München
- Wallaschek, R. (1891): „Über die Bedeutung der Aphasie für den musikalischen Ausdruck“, in: Vierteljahrsschrift für Musikwissenschaft, 7, p. 53-73
- Wallaschek, R. (1894): „Die Bedeutung der Aphasie für die Musikvorstellung“, in: Zeitschrift für Psychologie und Physiologie der Sinnesorgane, 6, p. 8-32
- Walther, K. M. (1927): „Bemerkungen zum Amusie-Problem“, in: Schweizer Archiv für Neurologie und Psychiatrie, 20, p. 295-315
- Wellek, Albert. (1963): Musikpsychologie und Musikästhetik – Grundriss der systematischen Musikwissenschaft. Frankfurt a. M.: Akademische Verlagsgesellschaft

## **(ii) Background material:**

- Abel-Struth, Sigrid (1985): Grundriss der Musikpädagogik, Mainz: Schott
- Dahlhaus, Carl et. al. (Hrsg.) (1982): Neues Handbuch der Musikwissenschaft, Bd. 10, Wiesbaden
- Gembris, Heiner (2006): Grundlagen musikalischer Begabung und Entwicklung (3rd edition), Augsburg: Wißner
- Heidegger, Martin (1927/2001): Sein und Zeit, Tübingen: Max Niemeyer
- Heidegger, Martin (1953/1998): Einführung in die Metaphysik, Tübingen: Max Niemeyer
- Heidegger, Martin (1961/1998): Nietzsche I, Stuttgart: Günther Neske
- Jacoby, Heinrich (1983): Jenseits von „Begabt“ und „Unbegabt“ (1945), Hamburg: Christians
- Jacyna, L. S. (2000): Lost words. Oxford: Princeton UP

- Kant, Immanuel (1803/1977): Über Pädagogik. Werkausgabe, Frankfurt a. M.: Suhrkamp, XII, p. 693-761
- Nietzsche, Friedrich (1882/1999): Fröhliche Wissenschaft, Kritische Studienausgabe (KSA), 3, München: dtv
- Nietzsche, Friedrich (1884-85/1999): Nachlass, KSA, 11, München: dtv
- Nietzsche, Friedrich. (1885-87): Nachlass, KSA, 12, München: dtv
- Pio, Frederik (2005): Musikalitetens fødsel, København: Danmarks Pædagogiske Universitets Forlag
- Pöggeler, Otto (1963/1994): Der Denkweg Martin Heideggers, Stuttgart: Günther Neske
- Safranski, Rüdiger (1994/2004): Ein Meister aus Deutschland – Heidegger und seine Zeit, Frankfurt a. M.: Fischer
- Steinberg, Reinhard (1994): Musikalität (Medizin, Amusie), in: Finscher, Ludwig (Hrsg.), Die Musik in Geschichte und Gegenwart (MGG), Bd. 6, Sachteil, Kassel: Bärenreiter, Sp. 867
- Vogt, Jürgen (2001) Der schwankende Boden der Lebenswelt. Würzburg: Königshausen & Neumann