REVISITING DIONYSUS: NIETZSCHE, HEIDEGGER, FOUCALUT

by

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B.A., University of British Columbia, 1996

A thesis submitted in partial fulfillment of the requirements for the Degree of

MASTER OF ARTS

in

The Faculty of Graduate Studies

Individual Interdisciplinary Studies Graduate Program
Germanic Studies/Music/English

We accept this thesis as conforming to the required standard

The University of British Columbia

April 2002

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This thesis challenges the traditional, Cartesian understanding of musical performance through a phenomenological investigation of aural experience. Whereas conventional approaches to musical performance prescribe separating 'work' from 'event' in order to ascertain musical meaning, we seek to reveal this dualistic framework as a limited knowledge paradigm and argue for a more situated account of performance that includes the myriad contingencies of its 'presentation.' To achieve this end, the writings of Friedrich Nietzsche, Martin Heidegger, and Michel Foucault are examined in order to construct a 'hermeneutic' framework for an interdisciplinary exchange between relevant works in philosophy, musicology, and acoustic science. A variety of contemporary rock, punk, post-punk, and electroacoustic performances are analyzed within this tri-partite model. Beginning with Nietzsche's concept of the Dionysian, we focus our attention on the musical event as a space of volatile, collective energies that can potentially be channeled into acts of mob violence, or into more positive forms of community. As we continue with the interdisciplinary dialogue, Heidegger and Foucault critique and refine Nietzsche's understanding of the Dionysian through their various analyses of human listening, mood, shared attunement, technology, power, and the body. By charting Nietzsche's concept of the Dionysian as it is reinterpreted by Heidegger and Foucault, a much broader, more differentiated understanding of musical experience is achieved.
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I have relied on Macquarrie and Robinson’s translation of Martin Heidegger’s *Being and Time* because of its scholarship. All quoted passages have been left unaltered, except for the term ‘state-of-mind’ which I have rendered as ‘mood’ or ‘attunement,’ following Joan Stambaugh’s 1996 translation. Stambaugh’s translation more faithfully preserves the musical overtones in the German, and avoids any misunderstandings of mood as a Cartesian mental state. All other translations have been left unaltered.
I am greatly indebted to a number of people who were willing to lend their support and their ideas to this project. I would like first to thank the members of my advisory committee: Steve Taubeneck, Richard Kurth, and John Cooper; and the Dean of the Individual Interdisciplinary Studies Graduate Program, Rhodri Windsor-Liscombe, who has worked to ensure the feasibility of interdisciplinary research here at UBC. I would also like to thank all those professors whose instruction helped shape various aspects of this thesis: Kevin McNeilly, Barry Truax, Andrea Sauder, Sonia Sikka, Alan Thrasher, Norman Stanfield, and Catherine Talmage. Finally, I would like to express my appreciation for the conversations on music I have had with Barbara Andersen, Christa Min, Chris Rudden, Jeffrey Orr, Matthew Corlett, Matthew Soules, Collin Knight, Alex Harmsen, Joel DeStefano, Rob Wright, Mirek Wanek, Brian Chippendale, Eileen Kage, Elaine Stef, Leslie Komori, and Irina Kevorkova.
INTRODUCTION

The Fragmentation of Music: Vitality in Diversity

Music, once tied strongly to religious ceremony and/or the legitimation of established social or political hierarchies, has become, at least in the West, too diffuse and too fragmented to be strictly aligned with any specific institution or ideology. While the heritage of many traditional forms of music is certainly being maintained, new forms of music are continually being developed, at a seemingly exponential rate, out of an entropic series of collisions and divisions among the old. The sheer increase in the technologies of musical production, and the experimental ventures which exploit these new technologies, continues to multiply and fracture music into ever more sub-categories and sub-cultural networks. Without question, the growing use of computers, samplers, sequencers, turntables, and other electronic equipment contributes to the extension of existing musical vocabularies and the creation of new musical dialects. And yet, despite the prerecorded nature of some of this new music, part of its energy is still channeled into social events featuring its live performance. Out of these and other new musical dialects emerge new performative spaces, new social codes, and thus, new musical communities.

But the space of live music involves even more than this: Musical events transpire—even erupt—wholly unplanned, in any number of places and on any number of occasions: in the home, in restaurants, in parks, on street corners, even in the streets. In all these different places, and different times—conventional performances included—sound the diverse musics of entertainment, celebration, and protest. And yet, however different all these musics may be in their history, purpose, or technical qualities, in the act of their public envoicement, they do share a common kinship as spaces of living music. Indeed, in its most definitive
expression, live music can catalyze a different set of social relations from those of the
everyday, and can initiate a space of new social possibilities, a new social mood. To be sure,
the scope of these moods is as broad and variable as the musical spaces themselves, and this
plurality will be the thrust of the argument to be explored here: the space of performance is a
site of social communication, and as such is best understood not as the presentation of some
musical work to an audience, but as a thoroughly situated, ephemeral event that includes all
those involved as participants—in mind, in body, in mood.

The collective nature of musical performance and its ability to bind together an
otherwise generally individuated group of people has long been asserted. Nevertheless,
testimony of its social power bears reiterating: musical events can be extraordinarily intense
situations, but the complexity of their operations has never been fully understood. We have
yet to theorize sufficiently those moments when one gets the sense—it may occur in an
intimate setting around a table in a restaurant, or at a wedding, or in a club, or in an arena full
of people—that most everyone present, albeit for a brief moment, is captivated, caught up in
something different from the everyday, a different mood, a different way of relating to
themselves and to others. However, examining the anatomy and exercise of this power—
even phrasing it in these terms—risks an immediate dismissal; this sense of belonging and
togetherness is simply an illusion, says the voice of the skeptic in all of us. But such is the
way that moods determine the manner in which things will show up for us at any given
moment: in musical events these social moods can and do fluctuate, but as they peak, their
hold can be next to total. In fact, the 'clarity of perspective' we presently enjoy as we recall
these and other moments of intensity—joy, anger, lust, despair—surely serves to re-
emphasize their thoroughly situated character, but one thing it most certainly does not do is
negate the reality of their occurrence. These contextual contingencies ought to be the locus of our investigation.

An interdisciplinary approach which integrates relevant knowledges from the disciplines of philosophy, musicology, and acoustics can contribute to a more comprehensive understanding of musical performance as a space of contingency, communication, and community. All these disciplines contain valuable and variant analyses of the most relevant components of performance that, cursorily, we have either mentioned or implicated above: musical affect, mood, collective ecstasy, corporeality, the ontology of sound/music, and the role of technology. Orchestrating these various disciplinary and ideological encounters—some dialogues, some confrontations—within a hermeneutic framework will ensure the necessary thematic and methodological grounding for a cohesive discussion of the issues.

Musical Triads: Dionysus, Apollo, and Hermes; Nietzsche, Heidegger, and Foucault

No one has understood this thoroughly captivating power of the affects—their trajectories, their rhythms, their peaks—better than Friedrich Nietzsche, and no one has offered a more satisfying account of their kinesis in a specifically musical context. Nietzsche is the philosopher who re-introduced the world to Dionysus as the god of music, and who thus urged us to again understand the space of the musical as one of intoxication, collectivity, and transformation. His Dionysus first re-emerged as the divine figure most suited to represent symbolically the music of Richard Wagner, and in terms of scholarship on the issue, there the composer has generally remained. But as contemporary music continues to divide itself anarchically into new, experimental networks of sound and space, an understanding of the Dionysian/Apollinian duality amidst these new contexts only becomes more and more important to pursue.
As we elect to re-visit Dionysus in order to understand musical events as situated spaces of communication and community, we are reminded that there is also another god—equally important to the understanding of social communication in context—to whom we are re-introduced through the contemporary hermeneutics of Nietzsche's successor Martin Heidegger. Hermeneutics, the science of interpretation, finds its methodological roots in a radically historicized Biblical exegesis, and its etymological roots in the Greek word for the messenger god Hermes. David E. Linge explains in the editor's introduction to Hans-Georg Gadamer's *Philosophical Hermeneutics* that the "earliest situations in which principles of interpretation were worked out were encounters with religious texts whose meanings were obscure or whose import was no longer acceptable unless they could be harmonized with the tenets of the faith" (xii). And as Gadamer reminds the reader in his essay "Aesthetics and Hermeneutics" in the book, "As the art of conveying what is said in a foreign language to the understanding of another person, hermeneutics is not without reason named after Hermes, the interpreter of the divine message to mankind" (98). Following the tenets of the tradition, contemporary hermeneutics suggests that the rift of meaning between message and receiver is a chasm that can never be completely spanned. Understanding always takes place as an event of interpretation, one that is necessarily mediated by the interpreter's various cultural-historical contingencies of language, tradition, or prejudice (in Gadamer's non-pejorative sense). Both the generative ground and constraining peak of interpretation itself, the inherently fore-guided nature of interpretation means that the interpreter brings both the openness and the resistance of this tradition in order to decipher some 'code,' but as the interpreter is constituted out of a particular tradition, s/he "cannot be dissolved into critical self-knowledge in such fashion that the prejudice-structure of finite understanding might
disappear” (Linge xv). The space of communication never involves complete decryption of some total text, but is rather the site of co-created and therefore unstable meanings; communication, according to the hermeneutic tradition, is always a radically situated event.

Thus, our re-visitation of Dionysus, like Nietzsche’s own original coupling of the Greek art deities, again becomes the staging of a confrontation between the gods, now a tension amongst a triad: Dionysus, Apollo, and Hermes. Just as in his elucidation of tragedy Nietzsche implores us to hear each figure speak in the tongue of the other, so it will be with our investigation of musical performance: it must be approached within a new relation that includes not only elements of intensity and community, but also explicitly incorporates themes of context, event, and contingency.

Friedrich Nietzsche, Martin Heidegger, and Michel Foucault, each in a unique manner, follow this hermeneutic circularity in their analyses of music, listening, being-in-the-world, art, power, and the body—all stressing a complex relation of co-dependent, reciprocal forces rather than charting a strictly linear chain of causes and effects. To be clear, Nietzsche and Foucault would both strongly resist the hermeneutic moniker, but their common understanding of a publicly-constructed subject who also constructs the world into which s/he is already ‘thrown,’ aligns them with at least one of the core tenets of the hermeneutic tradition. In The Gay Science, Nietzsche shows clearly his kinship with the most fundamental strictures of hermeneutics as he explores the question of

whether... all existence is not essentially actively engaged in interpretation—that cannot be decided even by the most industrious and most scrupulously conscientious analysis and self-examination of the intellect; for in the course of this analysis the human intellect cannot avoid seeing itself in its own perspectives, and only in these. We cannot look around our own corner.... (336)

And, as Hubert L. Dreyfus and Paul Rabinow contend in their book on Foucault’s post-hermeneutic philosophy, Michel Foucault: Beyond Structuralism and Hermeneutics:
Like Heidegger and Adorno he ([Foucault]) emphasizes that the historical background of practices, those practices which make objective science possible, cannot be studied by context-free, value-free, objective theory; rather, those practices produce the investigator and require an interpretation of him and his world. (166)

Nietzsche, Heidegger, and Foucault examine the thorough situatedness and contingency of the subject in differing but related capacities. However, in terms of our focus here on performance, the most important congruency in their 'hermeneutics' is that all three explore the equivocal reciprocity of group relations, of how individuals and collectives constitute one another: Nietzsche discusses this in explicitly musical terms with his account of the Dionysian throng; Heidegger explores the ambiguous unity of Dasein as Mitsein across the shared attunement of authentic discourse and the inauthentic mode of das Man alike; and Foucault investigates these group relations in terms of the various circulations of power in the disciplined mass. Here we shall in effect confront these thinkers with our own questions about musical performance: we confront Nietzsche over his model of perpetual conflict, and challenge the somewhat narrow scope of performance relations this permits; we confront Heidegger with the question of ecstasy and music, and his hesitant relation to the Dionysian; and we confront Foucault with the question of sound and power, and pose the possibility of examining music as a discipline. Within the works of these three thinkers are the elements of a richer understanding of musical performance not subject to the various methodological pitfalls of Cartesian knowledge systems that seek to remove sound and music from the important contexts of their presentation. While no thinker can offer a completely satisfying account of the musical event, the trajectory of philosophical influence amongst this triad—Heidegger with his indebtedness to Nietzsche, and Foucault with his indebtedness to both Nietzsche and Heidegger—suggests that a confrontation among them will yield a heterogeneous but still consonant model of musical performance. The particular
‘hermeneutic’ perspective shared by these philosophers offers a certain consistency of theme and method, so as the subjugated motifs of one thinker are developed by another, these seemingly disparate accounts of dissimilar phenomena are gathered into a tessellated coherence, in which related parts interlock to create a recognizable whole, but never disappear into complete synthesis.

Overview of Thesis

The relation of the sources examined in this interdisciplinary investigation, though rather complex, can be divided according to their primary, secondary, and tertiary importance. To begin with those texts which play a primary role, the Nietzschean portion of the overall framework for this discussion is derived from charting the continuity of the Dionysian in Nietzsche’s career, beginning with *The Birth of Tragedy*, and finishing in the posthumously compiled *The Will to Power*. The Heideggerian component of the model is informed from a reading of—most importantly but not exclusively—his critique of metaphysics and his examination of primordiality, mood, and listening in *Being and Time*, from his related critique of aesthetics and his hermeneutic understanding of the art event in “The Origin of the Work of Art,” and from his explicit confrontation with Nietzsche’s Dionysus in his *Nietzsche: Volume One: The Will to Power as Art*. Finally, the portion including important insights from Foucault on performativity and musical pluralism is gathered from his *Discipline and Punish*, and from his interview with Pierre Boulez on “Contemporary Music and Its Public.”

In terms of those texts which play a secondary role in the discussion, Heidegger’s “The Age of the World Picture,” “Logos,” “The Way to Language,” and “The Question Concerning Technology” augment present themes on metaphysics and listening, as well as
introduce new ones (most notably in terms of the question of technology). Also important to the Heideggerian dialogue are the comments on mood from Hubert L. Dreyfus’ companion to *Being and Time, Being-in-the-world*, his comparison of the later Heidegger and Foucault in his “Heidegger and Foucault on the Subject, Agency, Practices,” as well as the account of aurality offered by Don Ihde in his *Listening and Voice: A Phenomenology of Listening*. Reiner Schüermann’s *On Being and Acting: From Principles to Anarchy* is important for its keen reading of Heidegger’s treatment of aurality, community, and event, and Walter J. Ong’s discussion in *Orality and Literacy: The Technologizing of the Word* also contributes to the acoustic dimensions of Heidegger’s understanding of communication. The most important texts in the field of musicology include Lydia Goehr’s historical analysis of musical performance in *The Imaginary Museum of Musical Works: An Essay in the Philosophy of Music*, as well as the discussions of music’s sociality by Michael Chanan in *Musica Practica*, and Simon Frith in *Performing Rites*. In the category of the technological and scientific implications of sound, Barry Truax’s unwittingly Heideggerian analysis of listening in his *Acoustic Communication*, and Jacques Attali’s exploration of music in light of the advent of recording technology in his *Noise: The Political Economy of Music* are key texts in the interdisciplinary dialogue with Heidegger and Foucault respectively. And finally, Elias Canetti’s *Crowds and Power* contributes to the sense of volatility in Nietzsche’s concept of the Dionysian as well as the history of the audience’s training examined in the chapter on Foucault.

Sources of tertiary importance include interviews with musicians Steve Albini, Keith Jarrett, one personal interview on a performance by The Need conducted with Barbara Andersen (former editor of Vancouver’s *Discorder* magazine), reports on performances from
Woodstock '99, and GG Allin, as well as a host of personal anecdotes from various (remarkable) live musical events.

These sources (and others) are examined in four chapters. In chapter one, we first introduce Heidegger’s critique of Western metaphysics in *Being and Time* and “The Age of the World Picture” to frame the interdisciplinary dialogue which will suggest that a hegemonic visualist epistemology essentially ‘silences’ sound and music as it turns them into a mark in order that they be measured, and consequently, known. By integrating Truax’s history of the sound object with Chanan and Goehr’s historiography of the musical work, we chart, first, the social production of these objects as contributing factors in the contemporary understanding of performance as divided into ‘work’ and ‘event,’ and second, explore the implications that such a division has for the social relations of the audience.

In chapter two, we primarily examine *The Birth of Tragedy* and *The Will to Power* in order to understand the unpredictable volatility of the performance space, its range of incredibly disparate moods and possibilities. By exploring the continuity of the Dionysian across Nietzsche’s career, we assemble all the most relevant components of his model—its intensity, its placement of listeners within a musical event, its provisional sense of communication between those listeners—before critiquing the shortcomings in his model of perpetual strife.

Chapter three traces the course of Heidegger’s aurality across his career. With the exception of “Logos” (and those moments in which texts from different time periods are brought into dialogue), our general thematic trajectory begins with everyday listening and moves towards the musical event, to parallel the chronology of Heidegger’s main texts outlined above. Heidegger’s phenomenological investigation of Dasein in *Being and Time*,
the ‘being-there’ of human existence, offers, in comparison with Nietzsche, a notably less robust account of music—the theme of aurality instead centered on everyday human listening—but nevertheless makes an important suggestion about the relevant interrelationship of sound, mood, and the ‘shared attunement’ of being-with others—it is, in fact, a re-interpretation of the Dionysian. It is here, amidst these related elements of everyday aurality, that Heidegger’s hermeneutics of listening initiates an interdisciplinary dialogue with research in the domain of acoustics, an examination of sound that suggests a homological relation between everyday listening and the space of musical performance. Heidegger’s phenomenology continues into “The Origin of the Work of Art” in which the hermeneutic of the musical event, co-created by artist and audience alike, replaces the notion of the musical object with the event as a gathering of community. In Nietzsche, Volume One: The Will to Power as Art, Heidegger works tenaciously to explore the metaphysical undercurrent he is convinced Nietzsche was unable to escape, but in doing so, Heidegger manages to capture both the wild intensity of Rausch he purports to deplore, as well as concede the role of the body in the attuning power of mood. And finally, in light of this understanding of music as a hub of community, we engage the question of musical technology and its effects on the social relations of performance. We introduce as the main sources of this latter section Heidegger’s “The Question Concerning Technology” and Jacques Attali’s pivotal work, Noise: The Political Economy of Music, in order to examine the manner in which the introduction of electroacoustic technology—sound recording and playback equipment—disrupts an ontology of music as live, as life, and how this rupture initiates a new, restless ontology of music that continually vacillates amidst its own dialectic uncertainty.
In chapter four, Foucault's analysis of power and corporeality is examined from a performative perspective. In some of his personal interviews and in *Discipline and Punish*, Foucault's comments on the social, pluralistic, and affirmative nature of music as an event, combined with his understanding of the performing body in lateral power systems, respectively, extend themes of power and agency already present in the texts of Nietzsche and Heidegger. Dreyfus also helps us see that the later Foucault's generally Nietzschean understanding of a Heraclitean flux did begin to resemble the later Heidegger's understanding of the importance of localized gatherings as a resistance to technicity.

Indeed, these three thinkers can be approached as comprising a genealogy of a hermeneutics of listening. Although there are numerous continuities and discontinuities within this genealogy, a full hermeneutic theory of sonic experience remains to be achieved. Whereas Nietzsche has set us on perhaps the most definitive path towards an understanding of musical performance as an event of collective intensity, the textual margins of Heidegger and Foucault critique and refine, augment and extend this understanding to include a fuller sense of listening, mood, the performing body, and musical pluralism. From the provisional and varied accounts of voice, sound and music—indeed, the world of human hearing—a confrontation among these three thinkers can yield valuable insights on issues of corporeality, communication, and community in musical experience.
CHAPTER I

VISION AND METAPHYSICS: THE EMERGENCE OF
PERFORMATIVE AGENCY

Seeing Things: Acoustic Objects, Metaphysical Distances

The hermeneutic tradition holds that acts of interpretation at once reveal and conceal the world of the interpreter, maintaining, in corollary, that an interpreter may only encounter the world according to the necessarily limited possibilities permitted by their specific socialization. However, in his development of contemporary hermeneutics in *Being and Time*, Heidegger at once challenges and endorses the totalizing nature of historicity. While he does concur that the realization of a totally objective ground for human knowledge would be impossible, he also contends that by questioning from within the immediacy of one’s own tradition, one can achieve a certain clarity about the revealing and concealing prejudices of such understanding—in exploring the most basic assumptions of one’s interpretations, one can attain some sense of one’s history, of how oneself and one’s world came to ‘show up’ in the manner they presently do. Likewise, as we inquire into the ontology of musical performance, as we challenge our most basic assumptions about live music, and thus our understandings of its component parts—musical sounds, musical works, performers, and audiences—we are pulled into a genealogical examination of how these entities came to ‘be’ the things they presently are. Following Heidegger, our investigation suggests that the Western interpretation of being as constant presence-at-hand—from Plato’s forms through to Descartes’ *cogito*—and its corollary visualism of pure beholding erects a theory of knowledge that is ill-suited to thematize sound in its essential evanescence. Representing sound such that it fit this visualist paradigm has accelerated the drift towards precisely the
antinomy which marks our contemporary understanding of musical performance: the duality of work and event.

Without question, the sense of sight has dominated Western epistemology. The eye, it has generally been assumed, is the conduit of reality. Beginning to think about the sonic, and undertaking an engagement with the world of sound in its various manifestations immediately unfolds as a remarkably unusual and difficult task, the arduousness and novelty of which suggests a history of its gradual, systematic neglect. As Walter J. Ong reminds the reader in his book, *Orality and Literacy: The Technologizing of the Word*, in some periods aurality still enjoyed a strong, though marginal, role despite the influence exerted by the written word:

> Hearing rather than sight had dominated the older noetic world in significant ways, even long after writing was deeply interiorized. Manuscript culture in the west remained always marginally oral. Ambrose of Milan caught the earlier mood in his *Commentary on Luke* (iv. 5): ‘Sight is often deceived, hearing serves as guarantee.’ In the west through the Renaissance, oration was the most taught of all verbal productions and remained implicitly the basic paradigm for all discourse, written as well as oral. Written material was subsidiary to hearing in ways which strike us today as bizarre.... At least as late as the twelfth century in England, checking even written financial accounts was still done aurally, by having them read aloud. (119)

Yet, despite this somewhat astonishing resilience of aurality, the roots of our contemporary visualism have long been firmly secured in the grammar of epistemology. Probing the etymologies of these words shows that epistemic experience—coming to know or understand something—is always troped by the sense of sight. Quoting St. Augustine, in *Being and Time* Heidegger spells out the obvious visual privileging in everyday speech as we persistently replace the phraseology of the other senses with that of sight: “‘See how that sounds,’ ‘See how that is scented,’ ‘See how that tastes,’ ‘See how hard that is’” (215). And pertinent to a discussion of musical performance, even in the everyday rhetoric of live musical events, one talks of going to ‘see a concert,’ of going to ‘see a show.’ Speaking of this visualist history,
Reiner Schürmann notes in his book, *Heidegger On Being and Acting: From Principles to Anarchy*, that “since the classical Greeks, to think is to see. To know is to have seen, and to attain evidence is... ‘to have seen well’” (65).

A casual glance into the history of Western thought bears out this bond between vision and knowledge, a substantial amount of philosophical inquiry having been limited to what Don Ihde calls in *Listening and Voice: A Phenomenology of Sound* “the realm of mute objects” (50). As the immediacy of sense-experience disappears in a metaphysical drift towards the abstract, Ihde notes that in the philosophy of Aristotle, Plato, and Descartes, visuality remains the ground and peak of their concepts of knowledge, their epistemologies: Plato’s theory of knowledge rotates around a discussion of immutable forms; Aristotle’s acclamation of sight as the sense most keenly suited to discern difference (and therefore to access knowledge) is pivotal; and Descartes’ geometric spatiality of world as *res extensa* could be nothing other than silent. Knowledge is insofar as there is stasis. This, says Heidegger, is the essence of metaphysics:

Mathematical knowledge is regarded by Descartes as the one manner of apprehending entities which can always give assurance that their Being has been securely grasped. If anything measures up in its own kind of Being to the Being that is accessible in mathematical knowledge, then it is in the authentic sense. Such entities are those which always are what they are.... That which enduringly remains, really is.... Thus his ontology of the world is not primarily determined by his leaning towards mathematics, a science which he chances to esteem very highly, but rather his ontological orientation in principle towards Being as constant presence-at-hand, which mathematical knowledge is exceptionally well suited to grasp. (BT 128-9).

In fact, in her book, *The Imaginary Museum of Musical Works: An Essay in the Philosophy of Music*, Lydia Goehr appropriately discloses that “Descartes produced a rationalistic and mathematically based conception of musical principles of acoustics and harmony in his *Musicae Compendium*...”—for Descartes, and those who would follow his interpretation of the world as *res extensa*, sound would likewise continue to be interpreted as stillness (139).
As Heidegger explains in his essay, “The Age of the World Picture,” the epochal understanding of being invests itself into every facet of human interpretation and guides the manner in which the world will show up for those who live within any particular age:

Metaphysics grounds an age, in that through a specific interpretation of what is and through a specific comprehension of truth it gives to that age the basis upon which it is essentially formed. This basis holds complete dominion over all the phenomena that distinguish that age..... The whole of modern metaphysics taken together, Nietzsche included, maintains itself within the interpretation of what is to be and of truth that was prepared by Descartes. (115,127)

Sound, in and of itself being invisible and transient, is especially problematic for a Cartesian theory of knowledge which depends upon, as Heidegger states, being as constant presence-at-hand, a subject set apart from world as res extensa. In order to be suitably understood within this subject-object framework, sound must be ever more removed from its ephemeral essence and into its representation as a visual phenomenon, that is, to be apprehended, measured, and known, it must be placed into, in Ihde’s words, the ‘realm of mute objects.’ Albeit in motion before the advent of Cartesian metaphysics, this has been precisely the history of its transformation in musical as well as non-musical domains: a steady drift from that which is heard to that which is visualized on the musical staff, the oscilloscope, and the spectrum analyzer.

It was the positivistic energy transfer model that conceived listening as simply a chain of physical vibrations terminating in a nerve impulse, and the stimulus-response model pioneered by the founder of modern psychophysics, Gustav Fechner, which, as Barry Truax maintains in his book, Acoustic Communication, led to “the modern scientific distinction between the ‘objective’ acoustic parameters, such as intensity, frequency and waveform, and their psychoacoustic, ‘subjective’ counterparts, namely loudness, pitch and timbre, respectively...” (5). To sound is attributed inherent, objective properties of its own, now
capable of being rendered in visual terms and which correspond to subjective categories of experience. In the world of music, positivists like Deryck Cooke in his *Language of Music* would later appropriate the same framework in an attempt to forge equally tidy relationships between musical structures and semantic meaning, a project only made feasible under the dominion of the score as written notation (34). In his book, *Musica Practica*, Michael Chanan observes this union of vision and power when he claims that

> the authority acquired by the score evidently has a good deal to do with the role which it affords in musical intelligence to the process of vision. The basic vocabulary is largely derived from the sphere of optical phenomena: notes are high or low, they move up and down, they are separated by an interval, etc. (71)

Silent, enduring, knowable—as a visual mark, sound and music come to rest in the same presence as the Cartesian object, and in this settlement, likewise sit in concealment from their phenomenal voicing in time. And just as Ong charts a shift in human communication and human interpretation which parallels the rise of literacy, so can a parallel transformation of musical listening be observed to accompany the rise of a musical literacy, the rise of the score. To explain the scope of this shift, Chanan shares an anecdote in which he describes the difficulty Béla Bartok and Zoltán Kodály had in transcribing their own 1906 field-recording of some Hungarian folk music:

> When it came to transcribing what they’d recorded, they discovered that conventional notation wasn’t equal to the job. It required modification to capture the quarter-tones, for example, which the phonograph revealed directly to the ear as characteristic of this music but ‘cultured’ Western hearing all too easily failed to register. The drift of this argument is inescapable. Notation erected a block in the Western ear against the inner complexities of non-Western musics. A strange kind of deafness appeared in the most sophisticated ears…. Under the hegemony of notation, the Western psyche came to fear the embrace of what it repressed, and responded to any music which manifested this repressed material as if it were a threat to civilization. (77)

To be clear, ‘cultured’ Western hearing—of which Bartok and Kodály would certainly be exemplary—did not so much ‘fail to register’ the quarter-tones, for example, of non-Western musics, but rather found itself unable to assimilate these ‘interstitial’ sounds into its
theoretical system. Chanan, however, is much clearer in the latter half of the passage as he charts the ‘inescapable drift of this argument’: as aurality is increasingly counter-balanced with visuality, sound begins to announce itself accordingly. Indeed, as this anecdote suggests, the hegemony of notation—which stands germane to the hegemony of vision under a Cartesian metaphysics—exerts an almost totalizing pull over a general musical ontology, not so problematically for those musics whose practices include its sovereignty, but rather problematically for those musics which operate without constant recourse to its authority.

Charting one of the key extensions of the score’s hegemonic influence, in Performing Rites: On the Value of Popular Music, Simon Frith lauds the poignancy of Goehr’s metaphor of the museum of imaginary works as it applies to popular music:

And the power of this metaphor is reflected in the musicological approach to popular music: the first task is transcription, the translation of sound into score, whether the score of an imaginary event (most contemporary recorded music is not performed but constructed) or an improvised one (Ornette Coleman is said to have looked aghast at a transcription of one of his solos, knowing that he would be quite unable to play it). (259)

To be clear, transcription and formal analysis of the musical structures of even those musics which, as Frith intimates, could be considered inappropriate targets, constitutes no serious transgression in itself; it is rather, as Chanan argues, the exclusion of all other approaches to music, to other musics, that contributes to an impoverished understanding of their meaning through the marginalization of what may be called, under a positivist paradigm, ‘extra-musical’ aspects of presentation:

The discipline of musicology derives both its efficacy and its closure from analysing the formal qualities of music inscribed in its notation, which elicits a highly technical language to match the music’s complicated internal properties. This language seems to foreclose and dissolve away the discussion of music in almost any other terms (except perhaps emotional).... (38)

Or, as Susan McClary and Richard Leppert put it in the introduction to the book they edit, Music and Society: The Politics of Composition, Performance and Reception:
The only one of the arts that has remained largely untouched by [the new critical] redefinitions of method and subject matter in its academic discipline is music. For the most part, the discourse of musical scholarship clings stubbornly to a reliance on positivism in historical research and formalism in theory and criticism, with primary attention still focused almost exclusively on the canon. (xii)

It is first within the transformation of ephemeral sound into enduring mark that the severance is anticipated, but it is, as Heidegger will again reiterate, the greater course of Western metaphysics which is ultimately responsible for the separation of work and event. As this visualist metaphysics culminates in the age of the world-picture, as framed, as distinct, as a world represented by humanity “in the sense of that which has the character of object,” humanity itself is first separated from its world (AWP 132). In enumerating the most important extensions of this severance, Heidegger then appropriately notes that art too undergoes a concomitant transformation in its ontological status as it moves into “the purview of aesthetics. That means that the art work becomes the object of mere subjective experience…” (116). Echoing Heidegger’s assertion, Goehr describes that, in the world of music, this new understanding in, or perhaps as, aesthetics, produces the musical art object, the musical ‘work’:

At the end of the eighteenth century, changes in aesthetic theory, society, and politics prompted musicians to think about music in new terms and to produce music in new ways. Musicians began to think about music as involving the creation, performance, and reception of not just music *per se*, but of works as such. The concept of a work first began to serve musical practice in its regulative capacity at this time. Musicologists and other historians of music have dated this development much earlier, usually as far back as the sixteenth century. (iii)

As she traces the extensions of this turn, Goehr appropriately grounds the discussion in terms of a will to secure the legitimacy of musical art, a will that produced a pure, independent, enduring musical object divorced from the superfluous contexts of its reception:

Of all the changes in meaning the concept of serious music has undergone throughout its history, none has been more far-reaching in its effect than that which moved musical understanding away from ‘extra-musical’ towards ‘musical’ concerns. Before 1800 the pivotal question in philosophical thought about music, ‘what is music?’ asked for specification of music’s *extra-musical* function and significance....
The transformation gave rise to a new view of music as an independent practice whose serious concerns were now claimed to be purely musical. The emerging practice became specifically geared towards, and evaluated in terms of, the production of enduring musical products. It was only with the rise of this independent conception of music, in other words, that musicians began to think predominantly of music in terms of works. (122-3)

Paradoxically, the concept of the ‘purely musical’ was generated out of the desire to transcend the tyranny of the visual, that is, to prioritize a more serious listening, but the corollary ontology of the musical object would thereafter strengthen the visuality of music’s own theoretical apparatus. As there existed no concept of the ‘purely musical’ neither could there be an opposing category of the ‘extra-musical’—these two classes can only be born equiprimordially with the idea of an independent musical work; but this division is also itself a beginning, and will gradually bear the myriad dualities that mark our contemporary understanding of musical performance.

As Goehr contends, as late as the 1700s, the modern social dynamics of musical activity governing the creation, performance, and reception of musical works had yet to reach their most robust form, and thus a multitude of dichotomies were yet to emerge: audience/performer, rehearsal/performance, listening time/socializing time, and concert space/social space are some of the most conspicuous dualities which did not exist prior to this aesthetic shift.

**The Birth of the Musical Work and its Audience**

The contemporary picture of silent, attentive audiences who sit in sharp distinction to performers, and listen to rehearsed and perfected musical works that stand apart from the sociality of everyday life, and thus require a specific amount of time and a dedicated space for their proper presentation, is a result of the idea that music ought to be conceived of in terms of independent works. Without the work-concept, music does not occupy the exalted status of an art which exists simply for its own sake, but rather accompanies, and thus
remains spatially, temporally, aesthetically, and acoustically subordinate to, the social occasions it is meant to enhance. Previous to this new aesthetics, explains Goehr, music is altered and adapted according to the circumstances of each particular event, and those in attendance are free to socialize, sing along with, applaud, become bored with, and, ultimately, initiate the music’s arrest without any conscience for its apparent sovereignty:

Compositions were interrupted partly because they were not performed in concert halls devoted to their performance. Usually musical performances were background affairs within a church or court. As accompaniment either to serious or frivolous activities, they were rarely the immediate focus of attention. That fact was obvious given the behaviour of their audiences. Even the term ‘audience’ is misleading here, for music was not so much listened or attended to, as it was worshipped, danced, and conversed to. It was quite to be expected that audiences would applaud, chatter during, and sing along with a performance. Thus at one of Handel’s performances there were ‘shouts and acclamations at every pause.’ At another time there were several ‘disorders interrupting’ the performance. (192)

Goehr is clear to convey the relationship between music’s ontological status and the social behaviour during its ‘presentation.’ And while there is undoubtedly a wider scope of social tendencies in which to contextualize the change towards a more reserved audience conduct (i.e., the rise of the Bourgeoisie during the Enlightenment), these more general social trends cannot be understood independently of corollary epistemic changes of the period. The deification of reason played an integral role in shaping modern aesthetics, and thus also in first creating the notion of the musical work, and second, in prescribing the means of its legitimation: more elaborate notational systems strengthened the concept of the work as a ‘real’ entity. Indeed, the more fervently the enduring permanence of the work is secured through ever more rigorous notation, the more regimented become the set of behaviours necessary for its proper appreciation, and the more firmly secured become those dualities which have come to inform our common-sense understanding of musical performance today. The most significant of these dualities is the separation of audience and performer.
This separation—now most obviously expressed in the conventional spatial arrangement dividing audience from performer—has its origins in the new status of the musical work and is, thus, at base, not so much a division of physical space as it is one of perceived performative agency. As the level of specialized knowledge and skill required of the performers steadily increases, so too does the perceived importance of their role in the unfolding of the musical event; and, as the audience becomes increasingly alienated from the performer in their musical illiteracy, the perception of their role in the performance is likewise diminished. Describing this illiteracy in performative terms, in the “Music and Class Structure in the United States” chapter of his *Studies in Musicology 1935-1975*, Charles Seeger recounts the abysmal state of musical competence in the general population:

In America today, the vast majority of the population is virtually incapable of using either a normal oral music tradition on the one hand or an effective music literacy on the other. Few persons, whatever their economic, educational, or social status, can perform any music beyond the level of the simplest item of near-folk or folk-popular repertory, that is, of a six-year-old competence, in any but a mongrel mixture of styles. (232)

Ideological issues over aesthetic simplicity notwithstanding, Seeger’s comments point to the inarguable fact that most Westerners who choose to engage with music do so primarily as listeners and not as performers. However, an important detail must not be passed by in the lamentation over this apparent morass of musical skill: not only do most people lack competence in performance, but they also have an equally feeble grasp of musical rudiments and the associated vocabulary with which to conceptualize this music they enjoy so much. And yet, the force of their enthusiasm for and during this listening is just as likely to match that of the musically educated whose formal knowledge would outweigh theirs tenfold. As quoted by Frith, Nicholas Cook discloses his bewilderment upon observing that the degree of enthusiasm one may lend music seems to bear no correlation to the obviously lopsided split between the musically educated and the non-educated:
What I find perplexing, and stimulating, about music is the way in which people—most people—can gain intense enjoyment from it even though they know little or nothing about it in technical terms. (PR 253).

That the type of affiliation that, as Seeger suggests, most enthusiasts have with music has come to be perplexing and stimulating again illuminates the hegemonic influence notation has exerted over a general musical ontology—this confusion can only arise with the specialized knowledge of a musical grammar that is inextricably linked with a written score. But given the grossly uneven distribution of technical knowledge, our sympathies with this confusion should be equally puzzling. As Frith quotes the words of Frank Sibley, the burden lies in the hands of the opposite camp: it is not the imprecision and indeterminacy of the non-technical that bears any tenuous relation to musical pleasure, but rather the formalized, technical approach that struggles to offer a sufficiently rich sense of our appreciation:

Sibley's point is that "purely musical" descriptions (more or less technical accounts of what is "actually" heard) "fail to articulate what, following others, I have been calling the 'character' and qualities of music, and do little to explain why music may engage us as appreciative listeners—which is why non-musicians and musicians alike employ figurative characterizations." (PR 263)

The purely musical and the extra-musical compose the two sides of what is, in effect, a dialectic of power: the space of music becomes the site of a silent struggle over performative agency, over exactly what and who matters, that is, over who controls the event. To be more specific, the issue at stake is not so much the unequivocal division between those who are making the music and those others who are there to watch and listen, but it is rather the perceived ineffectuality of the audience as co-creators of the meanings of the musical events they are a part of that contributes to an impoverished understanding of musical performance.

As musical works take on a kind of static air, they become detachable from the events they now sustain, and thus, so too does the audience, feeling that it plays but a marginal role
in the way the music will unfold, a component capable of being inserted and removed without consequence to the character of the ‘works’ the musicians perform. Notice that, according to comments from independent interviews with jazz musician Keith Jarrett and Steve Albini, guitarist of minimalist rock trio Shellac, in performances which operate without the ontological conception of the fixed musical work, the audience plays a significant role in shaping the character of the event:

The audience is much more part of the music than they think.... When we say no photography and they decide to take photos anyway, they think they’re detached from the performance. They never allow themselves to realize that they have something to do with what happens on stage, especially with improvisation. Audiences play a large role and it can be positive or it can be not positive. (Jarrett)

Very few of our songs even have a definite arrangement that stays the same from day to day.... Some of this experimentation takes place on stage, which forces us to make decisions on the spot, without too much deliberation.... The best thing about playing live is feeling that you’re part of a big communal experiment that involves the band and the audience as participants. I’m always curious what’s going to happen, and when I am surprised, I am delighted. (Shellac)

Jarrett’s opening remark pinpoints the key issue: audiences have come to largely underestimate their own participatory role in these types of musical events—this is the distance modern aesthetics has prescribed for the proper reception of works—and, as they both go on to say (and Albini to later show through the anatomy of Shellac’s performances), this disconnected understanding can express itself in a host of negative ways. Indeed, although their musical styles and respective degrees of improvisation may differ somewhat, Jarrett and Albini have remarkably similar analyses of these audience/performer relations, both strongly asserting that, from the perspective of the performers, the success of the event is absolutely bound up with the nature of this interaction. For Jarrett explicitly, and for Albini more implicitly, these relations exert some sway over ‘what happens on stage’ (which is to say, presumably, the playing of, and communication between, the musicians) and thus, albeit in some generally unascertainable manner, contribute to the character of the music being
performed. However, while the behaviour of the audience undoubtedly has some influence upon the sound of the music, and is important, in part, for this role, expressing this participation solely in these terms ultimately negates the very impetus of its inclusion in the discussion, namely, to challenge the notion that musical performance is nothing more than the presentation of sound to an audience. Even positing a reciprocal communication between the musicians and the audience (and between the musicians themselves), to maintain that some particular aspect of musical performance is important only insofar as it affects the sound of the music itself is to preserve—in fact, to fortify—the legitimacy of the ‘purely musical’ as the key benchmark of a successful musical event. Whatever the nearly infinite number of mitigating factors, whether audience behaviour, performer psychology, or temperature of the concert space—one could attempt to account for such possibilities *ad absurdum*—expressing their influence solely in terms of musical output misrepresents the real complexity of the contingencies of musical performance. While such an approach purports to incorporate the radicality of context and contingency, it actually eradicates those entire categories as currently expressed, that is, it erases the domain of the extra-musical, and continues to set musical sound as the sole arbiter of meaning, and the listener as only a receiver of acoustic messages.

Indeed, while it is certainly conceded that there exist better and worse interpretations/performances of a given musical work, that is, that the autonomy of the work is necessarily mediated in its being-executed by a musician, audience presence is not generally acknowledged to be an important part of performative contingency. However, a common example from the concert world shows that the kind of audience presence during a performance plays an integral role for the manner in which this music will be interpreted to
manifest itself, the manner in which it will come to affect those who are there as participants: contrast the power one feels during a sparsely-attended afternoon soundcheck with the much greater impact of the later evening performance at which there may be hundreds or thousands in attendance—despite the congruity of the musical work(s), the consistency of the musician(s) and the constancy of the performance space, these two ‘performances’ emerge as incontestably different events, and thus, a sense of audience presence, of being-there with other listeners, likewise emerges as an unquestionably crucial component.

And yet, this simple anecdote which suggests, quite plainly, that some understanding of context, event, and sociality is necessary for a thorough account of musical performance, is likely to seem a radical pronouncement. What is this being-with others at a musical performance? Does mood play an integral role in these relations? What about bodies, their spatial arrangements, and their movements? The sights and sounds of others? Is this sociality marked by relations of power or their temporary suspension? Is it important to understand the way in which the affair was framed from well before the event officially began? In fact, pursuing this line of thought means challenging the precise methodology that those in the domains of acoustic science and aesthetics alike have employed in their quest for the truth about sound: in all these cases, the observer seeks to put a distance between her/himself and the phenomenon, by bracketing off, as much as possible, the context of its occurrence.

**Aural Modes: Sound In and Out of Context**

To re-iterate the same in Heideggerian terms, conceptualizing sound and music within a subject-object relation presupposes, just as Descartes’ endorsement of mathematics, first, the idea of being as constant presence-at-hand, and thus, the mode of pure, distanced beholding with which it must be apprehended. This approach to the acoustic world, which
has come to seem quite natural, proceeds under the guidance of a methodology which actually covers over the everyday immediacy of experience: in order to understand what sound 'is,' and how it comes to affect us, it and its effects must be studied in isolation, apart from their worldly, environmental contexts and instead in terms of their theoretical, abstract properties. As Truax contends over the course of his book, this has been as true of noise as it has been of music: “The scientific method has achieved its results through an experimental methodology that allows observable phenomena to be studied in isolation from the variables that normally complicate most situations” (3). However, as Truax explains the essential impetus for his 'communicational' model, to remove sound from the conditions of its worldly operation is to remove the critical dimension of its meaning, stressing that a “sound means something partly because of what produces it, but mainly because of the circumstances under which it is heard” (xii; my gloss). Exploring the scope of context and contingency thus marks the essence of a more comprehensive, richer understanding of acoustic experience:

What distinguishes a model as communicational, in contrast to those arising within the study of a particular system (e.g., linguistic, musical) is the inclusion of the pragmatic level, that is, the notion of context. For instance, music is traditionally analyzed for how it is structured, not how it functions socially. Communicational meaning can only be assessed when a message is understood within its context. The meaning of a message can differ when it occurs within a different context, and conversely, two different messages may have the same meaning within a single context. (What does a piece by Debussy mean when heard in a supermarket?). (Truax 158)

And, as Frith quotes Lucy Green’s situational understanding of music as occurrence:

Both experience of the music and the music’s meanings themselves change complexly in relation to the style-competence of the [listener], and to the social situations in which they occur…. [M]usic can never be played or heard outside a situation, and every situation will affect the music’s meaning. (PR 250)

Green’s comments elicit precisely the key point that many of music’s interpreters miss altogether: we are always in some situation, musically or otherwise, and to the extent that one attempts to ignore these contingencies, will thus offer an associatively limited portrait of its
meaning. However, accounting for the anatomy of these contexts is a boundless task—there is simply no limit to the possibility of inclusion. However, if, in pragmatic terms, we pursue an understanding of sound, music, and performance in which we include those most relevant micro-and-macro locations of culture, history, corporeality, space, mood, and power we will gain a better understanding of the musical event as a space of contingency, communication, and community.
CHAPTER II

RHYTHM AND RISK:
THE BIRTH OF TRAGEDY AND THE WILL TO POWER

Harnessing Dionysus

We shall have gained much for the science of aesthetics, once we perceive not merely by logical inference, but with the immediate certainty of vision, that the continuous development of art is bound up with the Apollinian and Dionysian duality—just as procreation depends on the duality of the sexes, involving perpetual strife with only periodically intervening reconciliations. (Nietzsche, BoT 33)

First published in 1872, it is in The Birth of Tragedy: Out of the Spirit of Music, that Nietzsche shares some of his most valuable insights on musical experience, attempting to articulate its essential difference from, as well as its relation to, an experience of the plastic arts. In order to demonstrate this relation, Nietzsche opts to place the reader amidst a variety of contrasting situations—as he will do later in The Will to Power—so that he may show, by analogy, the separate but intermingling worlds of Apollo and Dionysus—Nietzsche goes, so to speak, to the phenomenon, to music as a collective event. Before moving on to include the more communicative frenzy he explores in his physiological aesthetics of the later text, The Will to Power, it is first necessary to have some sense of his overall project in The Birth of Tragedy, where he first introduces the essential elements of the dialogue.

Written prior to his break with Wagner, The Birth of Tragedy is appropriately dedicated to him: it is often as bombastic as the music of his mentor, its prose what Walter Kaufmann dubs in the translator’s introduction as “occasionally hyperromantic and turgid” (BoT 4). But like Wagner’s music—or perhaps all music in general—it is a book of and for certain moments—a point about the text Kaufmann also makes. Indeed, while the number of themes and avenues Nietzsche explores in this text is beyond discussion here, another quote from Kaufmann sets concisely the task at hand:
Indeed, it is one of Nietzsche's central points in the book that we cannot do justice to the achievements of the Greeks and the triumph of those powers of restraint he calls the Apollinian unless we first behold the unrestrained Dionysian energies that the Greeks managed to harness. (BoT 4)

As Kaufmann so aptly puts it, the question is precisely how to channel this energy, how to understand and harness the volatility and vitality of Dionysus.

Nietzsche first urges us to look back into the history of Greek art in order to gain a better understanding of art's function and meaning in our own (post)modern era. He argues that, unlike ourselves, the Greeks did not understand art in terms of concepts but rather, "in the intensely clear figures of their gods," Apollo and Dionysus (BoT 33). For Nietzsche, the corresponding terms 'Apollinian' and 'Dionysian' can be understood not only as separate art-worlds but also as art-impulses originating in nature, as psychological perspectives, and as psychological effects. By first understanding their exclusive domains and then their brilliant union in Attic tragedy, Nietzsche wants to re-initiate a tragic world-view that affirms life in its inevitable suffering.

He begins his project with an explanation of the Apollinian domain. For Nietzsche, the purely Apollinian art-impulse is best represented by an analogy to dreams and manifests itself most accurately in the firmly-articulated plastic art of sculpture. As spectators of this art we are significantly engaged with and delighted by its appearance yet still remain within the boundaries of a will-oriented, subject-object dichotomy; thus "we still have... the sensation that it is mere appearance" (BoT 34). Apollo then is the tranquil and tranquilizing "soothsaying god," the harbinger of the most spectacular "beautiful illusion[s]... which make life possible and worth living" (BoT 35). As Nietzsche stresses in this work, "existence and the world seem justified only as an aesthetic phenomenon" (BoT 141). Indeed, for Nietzsche, the Apollinian/Dionysian duality extends beyond a model for the understanding of art, but is
really an equivocal tension rooted in nature itself (BoT 38). For Nietzsche, a necessary part of our relationship to the world of culture is a faith, a trust in the "principium individuationis... and we might call Apollo himself the glorious divine image of [this principle]" (BoT 36). Within the Apollinian perspective we are able to augment our everyday existence by engaging in beautiful illusions while still retaining our necessary subjective will, a will that allows us to continue our rational activity and comportment within civilized society. Throughout Nietzsche's description of the Apollinian there exists a sense of the Kantian beautiful, of permanence, of an almost pathological comfort in stillness. Indeed, in order to grasp the nature of the Apollinian impulse "we must keep in mind that measured restraint, that freedom from the wilder emotions, that calm of the sculptor god" (BoT 35).

The Dionysian art-impulse reveals itself in all that is the antithesis of the Apollinian: the excess and ecstasy of intoxication, orgiastic frenzy, and the intangibility of musical art (BoT 33,36). Dionysus introduces us to "the emotional power of the tone, the uniform flow of the melody, and the utterly incomparable world of harmony" that "seeks to get behind all phenomenon" (BoT 40, 104). Through these devices, Dionysian music exerts a profoundly intoxicating effect and within this "narcotic" spell we experience the collapse of the subject-object antinomy. Where the Apollinian experience of the plastic arts (or language) preserves this subject-object distinction, the experience of Dionysian music is marked by its (temporary) rupture:

[A]t this collapse of the principium individuationis, we steal a glimpse into the nature of the Dionysian, which is brought home to us most intimately by the analogy of intoxication.... Under the influence of the narcotic draught, of which the songs of all primitive men and peoples speak,... these Dionysian emotions awake, and as they grow in intensity everything subjective vanishes into complete self-forgetfulness. (BoT 36)

The effect of this collapse is such that the listener feels not only unified with other human beings but also reconciled with nature and as "primordial being itself" (BoT 36, 104). As
Nietzsche writes, “under the charm of the Dionysian not only is the union between man and man reaffirmed, but nature which has become alienated, hostile, or subjugated, celebrates once more her reconciliation with her lost son” (BoT 37). When the Apollinian “veil of maya” is torn aside in a musical frenzy, Dionysus is revealed as the primordial ground of existence in all its “terror” and “absurdity” (BoT 40, 60). Nietzsche first praises Dionysian ecstasy, but then points to the moment of its own annihilation as something that confronts us in a very disturbing manner (BoT 19). As the Dionysian rapture dissipates and the everyday, empirical world that was momentarily transcended now reappears, it is seen with a new and “nauseated” understanding of our own powerlessness—our will to action is paralyzed. Where we were once happily deluded by Apollo’s illusion we are now tragically aware of the contingency and “absurdity of existence” (BoT 60). Thus, as Nietzsche reminds us from the beginning of the text, the question remains for Dionysus and Apollo to be seen in their complex interrelation, that is, in an antagonistic strife within a parallel structure (BoT 33).

Important to retain in our model of performance, Nietzsche’s understanding of musical intoxication provides more than just a pleasurable experience: both destructive and revealing, it is a productive rupture in which listeners affirm their sense of belonging to one another:

[N]ow all the rigid, hostile barriers that necessity, caprice, or impudent convention have fixed between man and man are broken. Now, with the gospel of universal harmony, each one feels himself not only united, reconciled, and fused with his neighbor, but as one with him, as if the veil of maya had been torn aside and were now merely fluttering in tatters before the mysterious primordial unity. In song and dance man expresses himself as a member of a higher community. (BoT 37)

Nietzsche quite clearly suggests that there is at least a temporary suspension of hierarchical relationships between the participants of such a rapture. He is right in asserting the musical event as quite an extraordinary space in just this manner—there do seem to be moments, if
only for a brief period, or perhaps a multitude of brief periods, in which the event reaches an almost supra-political plane. In listening together and perhaps dancing together, a shared sense of community is felt between people who would otherwise remain quite alienated from one another—‘necessity’ and ‘impudent convention’ in the everyday world of (what Nietzsche refers to as) culture make this encounter between strangers or loose acquaintances exceedingly difficult. This unique state is accomplished through the tensions between the Apollinian and Dionysian. Where everyday linguistic discourse preserves the principal of individuation, and thus an unequal power dynamic between people, Nietzsche’s description of music is appropriately permeated with a language of access. Thus, in terms of tragedy, language “can express nothing that did not already lie hidden in the vast universality and absoluteness in the music…” (BoT 55).

Transmissions from the Dead: The Will to Power as a ‘Text’

Satisfying though Nietzsche’s courageously juvenile account of Rausch may be, this, however, is not Nietzsche’s final word on the subject of musical intoxication—but then, neither are his aphorisms in The Will to Power. In the editor’s introduction to the book, Walter Kaufmann is keen to remind the reader that, despite its contemporary appearance as a unified text, The Will to Power in its current form is not the book Nietzsche himself ever intended to publish and is actually comprised of a collection of random notes written between 1883 and 1888, which were then posthumously organized and published by his sister, Elisabeth Förster-Nietzsche. Yet, within his invective condemning the chronic and willful misrepresentations of Nietzsche in relation to this work, Kaufmann also asserts the value of its study. As he writes, “there is no need to downgrade Nietzsche’s notes because they are mere notes…[but] these notes obviously do not represent his final views” (WP xvi). Indeed,
Kaufmann's most vehement criticism is levied at those who have mistakenly dubbed *The Will to Power* Nietzsche's "crowning achievement," his *magnum opus*, and thus suggest reading the text on terms wholly unwarranted by the work itself—Kaufmann's ambivalence warns the reader to approach the text accordingly.

**The Birth of Tragedy and The Will to Power: The Dionysian as Communication**

Despite the very disjunctive nature of the text, examining Nietzsche's comments on aesthetic experience in *The Will to Power* contributes to a more comprehensive picture of his views on musical *ecstasis* first and rather ambitiously presented in *The Birth of Tragedy*. Between these texts arcs an illuminating continuity of the Dionysian. Indeed, Nietzsche's discussion of the aesthetic state in *The Will to Power* seems remarkably unfocused on, even decidedly avoidant of, expected and typical analyses of works of art, but this is only the progression of his aesthetics proclaimed in the *Birth of Tragedy*: "[I]t is only as an *aesthetic phenomenon* that existence and the world are eternally justified"—he is, after all, someone who extends the notion of 'artwork' to include the Prussian officer corps as well as the Jesuit order (BoT 52; WP 419). Perhaps attempting to convey the depth, breadth and importance of an artistic rapture, Nietzsche operates largely by analogy, first probing seemingly unrelated realms before announcing their respective affinities with artistic experience. Indeed, pervasive throughout Nietzsche's discussion in Part IV of Book III are descriptions of what could be described as a dilated sensory pellucidity, germane, but by no means exclusive to, the realm of artistic creation and aesthetic experience. In fact, although Part IV of *The Will to Power* bears the title 'The Will to Power as Art,' in aphorism #801 Nietzsche seems keen on first positing a certain kinship between what may be considered disparate human drives, moods, and heightened states: "sexuality; intoxication; feasting; spring; victory over an
enemy, mockery; bravado; cruelty; the ecstasy of religious feeling” (421). Before moving on
to assert the express animality of such an upwelling in this aphorism and the next, he
reiterates as fundamental the ingredients of the “witches’ brew” first mentioned in The Birth
of Tragedy, declaring that in all the heightened states there are “three elements principally:
sexuality, intoxication, cruelty—all belonging to the oldest festal joys of mankind” (BoT 40;
WP 421). From the elements in the aforementioned list, Nietzsche asserts, the aesthetic state
is thus comprised.

A plethora of musical forms and styles elicit interpretations which point to an explicit
sexuality, a narcotic adulteration and/or the kind of hubris associated with violent
domination—certainly not all, but many forms of music feature the overall rise-climax-fall
trajectory easily mapped onto these domains. However, unlike many commentators on music,
Nietzsche is not only interested in outlining musical representations of such drives, that is, in
the interpretation of a musical ‘text,’ but also in engaging with the question of how, within
the participation of an actual musical event, these drives are thus arranged, experienced, and
expunged in a listening audience, indeed, how they are performed. Richard Schacht declares
the key importance of this point in his Nietzsche:

Nietzsche does not take the notions of transfiguration and illusion to apply only to works of
Apollinian and Dionysian art conceived as object [sic] of aesthetic experience, but rather also
to the subjects of such experience insofar as they become absorbed in them.... The entire
significance of art is missed, for him, if one does not recognize that the consciousness of those
experiencing these art-forms undergoes a transformation analogous to that occurring in their
creation; and that the experiencing subject’s very psychological identity thereby is in a sense
transfigured, even if only temporarily.... (492)

Schacht is keen to stress that Nietzsche’s analysis of art in The Birth of Tragedy does not
begin and end with the metaphorical description of some isolated art-object, but neither does
it start and finish with only a psychological transformation. Nietzsche’s seemingly tangential
accounts of various ecstases above serve as a provisional contextualization of musical
performance, and thus suggest not only a psychological, but also a physiological and corporeal placement within the musical event—in musical performance, the Dionysian is most intensely experienced amidst the drives and bodies of others.

Nietzsche's analysis is perhaps most applicable to those musical events in which there exists the structural and historical possibility of an intense, collective experience, those in which the anarchic is not merely represented musically, but also enacted physically. The North American and European rock festival scenes which first emerged in the '60s and have continued to the present are certainly exemplary of Nietzsche's claim—writhing bodies of those intoxicated by sound and/or substance seem to tread an ambiguous distinction between an erotic bonding and masochistic self-cruelty. Nietzsche's same triad of drives (sexuality, intoxication, feasting) could easily be applied to various industrial, metal, punk, and skinhead/Oi! performances in which audience members (primarily male) who participate in the scrum known as 'the pit' justifiably expect and revel in the (mostly playful) administering and receiving of physical pain. And yet, as Nietzsche also states (and as it is apparent to the observer of such a display), from out of this strange melee comes pleasure.

Clearly, Nietzsche wishes to relay a sense of an animalistic possession, an altered state in which certain physical and mental faculties enjoy a simultaneous sharpening and heightened awareness within a loss of cultural inhibition, a kind of blissful forgetting. Indeed, there is a remarkable conflation of the inhuman and the superhuman in Nietzsche's description, an almost mechanistic brand of the chaotic that, paradoxically, suggests a kind of organic, feral volatility. In addressing the nature of rapture in this manner, Nietzsche answers his own question posed in his Attempt at a Self-Criticism from The Birth of Tragedy: "Where does that synthesis of god and billy goat in the satyr point? What experience of himself, what
urge compelled the Greek to conceive the Dionysian enthusiast and primeval man as a satyr?... Visions and hallucinations shared by entire communities or assemblies at a cult?" (21). Capturing the sexuality in the escalating momentum of such a seizure, Nietzsche writes that intoxication is:

the feeling of enhanced power; the inner need to make of things a reflex of one’s own fullness and perfection; the extreme sharpness of certain senses, so they understand a quite different sign language—and create one—extreme mobility that turns into an extreme urge to communicate; the desire to speak on the part of everything that makes signs—; a need to get rid of oneself, as it were, through signs and gestures; ability to speak of oneself through a hundred speech media—an explosive condition.... [A] compulsion and urge to get rid of the exuberance of inner tension through muscular activity and movements of all kinds; then as an involuntary co-ordination between this movement and the processes within (images, thoughts, desires)—as a strong stimuli from within—; inability to prevent reaction; the system of inhibitions suspended, as it were. Every inner movement (feeling, thought, affect) is accompanied by vascular changes and consequently by changes in color, temperature and secretion. The suggestive power of music, its “suggestion mentale”.... (WP 428-9)

Here, in the *Will to Power*, and earlier in *The Birth of Tragedy*, Nietzsche offers a decidedly Freudian model of human drives annexed with his own intensified emphasis on the physiological signs of their kinesis:

Inwardness grows as powerful drives that have been denied outward release by the establishment of peace and society seek compensation by turning inward in concert with the imagination. The thirst for enmity, cruelty, revenge, violence turns back, is repressed;... the drives are transformed into demons whom one fights, etc. (WP 202-3)

Musical experience, for Nietzsche, disrupts this circularity and re-channels these drives into an outward expression. Nietzsche’s picture of the listener is thus one of psycho-physiological dynamism, of circulating, combustible energies stored/repressed in cultural necessity and released explosively in a performed return to the primordial home. Indeed, the exemplary musical experience, for Nietzsche, is this return, one that, in its greatest intensity, would transport the listener out of a constrained and artificial everyday world of culture, and back into the liberating anarchy of nature. Such descriptions of musical transcendence in *The Birth of Tragedy* reflect this well-documented, rather ubiquitous concept that sound exists as the
mediating force between this, the world of culture, and the 'other' world, that of nature and spirit:

And now let us imagine how into this world, built on mere appearance and moderation and artificially dammed up, there penetrated, in tones ever more bewitching and alluring, the ecstatic sound of the Dionysian festival; how in these strains all of nature's excess in pleasure, grief and knowledge became audible, even in piercing shrieks; and let us ask ourselves what the psalmmodizing artist of Apollo, with his phantom harp-sound, could mean in the face of this demonic folk-song! (46)

Nietzsche shows a clear reverence for these moments when the world of 'culture' (understood in terms of an adherence to reason and conformity to social norms) is ruptured, penetrated by the comparatively untamed and more intense expression of emotion associated with the 'natural,' the animal. Nietzsche foregrounds the notion that it is in the fear of this intensity—of its uncertain expressions—that humanity has become domesticated in the soothing security of a herd morality. Nietzsche instead calls for us to compose ourselves out of this more erratic uncertainty—he calls for us to embrace a more dynamic rhythm:

From a superior viewpoint one desires the contrary: the ever-increasing dominion of evil, the growing emancipation of man from the narrow and fear-ridden bonds of morality, the increase of force, in order to press the mightiest natural powers—the affects—into service. (WP 208)

Admittedly, the potentially fomenting quality of such passages may make for a rather apprehensive endorsement of Nietzsche's understanding (if for any at all): such a model evokes an unquestionably dangerous determinism rife with the possibility of violence and abuse, but is disturbingly unconcerned with any associated moral culpability. Not to dismiss these concerns, and perhaps only to increase any present queasiness, we ought to examine in greater detail Nietzsche's claim that an enviable enhancement of the communicative functions is enjoyed through musical intoxication, that a more refined, improved sensory epistemology emerges within this state.
Although it is often assumed that Nietzsche's aesthetics ultimately funnels into a narrow, perhaps even solipsistic, physiological reductionism, there also exists an opposite, radiating trajectory which situates this physiology in its thoroughly communicative role:

The aesthetic state possesses a superabundance of means of communication, together with an extreme receptivity for stimuli and signs. It constitutes the high point of communication and transmission between living creatures—it is the source of languages. This is where languages originate: the languages of tone as well as the languages of gestures and glances. The more complete phenomenon is always the beginning.... Every enhancement of life enhances man's power of communication, as well as his power of understanding.... One never communicates thoughts: one communicates movements, mimic [sic] signs, which we then trace back to thoughts. (WP 427-8)

Although here he is addressing art experience in general, it is difficult not to interpret these comments as but a slightly more magnified account of the Dionysian scene presented in his early work. Catalyzing an extraordinary system of relations not carried out through linguistic means, musical performance unfolds in this interplay of bodily communication amongst the audience—as audience members rendered largely reticent by the volume and social significance of the performance, our bodies become sites of physical communication for and with other listeners, simultaneously transmitters and receivers of a multitude of 'signals.' The momentum of our intoxication is one that, in part, gathers its intensity from an involvement within these audience relations, the manner in which we are, in some way, 'possessed' by these other listeners—the Dionysian scene, after all, is one of collective force, not individual aesthetic delight. Expressing this momentum in typically hyperbolic fashion, Nietzsche first tries to convey the sense of a certain cowardice, of a lame and feeble paralysis in those who resist indulging in the totality of such an intoxication: "But of course such poor wretches have no idea how corpse-like and ghostly their so-called 'healthy-mindedness' looks when the glowing life of the Dionysian revelers roars past them" (BoT 37). In short, Nietzsche claims that life is indeed enhanced, that we can actually improve through such a possession.
Affirming Transgression: The Volatility of the Crowd

For Nietzsche, musical performance opens a space in which new and extraordinary possibilities of human relations, that is, different possibilities from the tempered rhythms of everyday life, have an opportunity to emerge. The value of such a possession is measured precisely in terms of its divergence from common, potentially banal modes of discourse. Our own improvement is then congruent with the degree of this collective divergence, with the radicality of the social experiment, and thus, at bottom, with its risk. From out of this risk emerge all the most powerful and affirming moments of musical elation that have long been described to bond communities of listeners. But, as risk, this volatility also harbours the potential for danger. It is foreshadowed in the acerbic arrogance of Nietzsche’s comments about the ‘glowing life’ of the Dionysian revelers: it is the momentum of their possession that carries them roaring past the others, but it is only blind luck that keeps them from carrying straight on through and trampling those not caught up in their drive. As Elias Canetti contends in his book, Crowds and Power, there is inhering in any gathered mass the seeds of its possible eruption: “The destructiveness of the crowd is often mentioned as its most conspicuous quality, and there is no denying the fact that it can be observed everywhere, in the most diverse countries and civilizations” (19). To lend endorsement to the liberating nature of this Nietzschean anarchism, to let it stand as the articulation of an intense and transcendent musical ecstasis, is to endorse the undeniable likelihood that some performances will either erupt into, or specifically declare themselves to be, sites of violence, abuse, and domination.

It may sound extreme, but a few contemporary examples show that this is not merely a hypothetical concern, or the dramatizing of an alarmist. Citing the paradigmatic example
which outlines the dangers of sanctioning a boisterous, ecstatic feeling of community in music, David Schwartz reminds the reader in his book, *Listening Subjects: Music, Psychoanalysis, Culture*, that racist German skinheads draw the energy for their prescribed violence from the collective frenzy of their performances:

> Oi's long-term effects in its listeners is the production of a sense of community for skins in Germany. Its most common short-term effect is that it is sometimes used to incite acts of terror against foreigners.... (101)

An intimate feeling of community and an absolutely explicit mandate for terror, however, are by no means requisite in inflaming the violent impulse of the crowd: musical performance can also ignite the same will amongst total strangers. An Associated Press article from July 1999 describes that, in the wake of its finish in flames and rioting, the drug and alcohol fueled “Woodstock 1999” held in Rome, NY, had state police confirming reports of four alleged rapes (one apparently occurring in the mosh pit of the main stage during Limp Bizkit’s performance) in addition to a number of other sexual assaults (Police). The article goes on to quote volunteer David Schneider’s testimony on the number and the collective nature of these assaults:

> [These women] were pushed [into the mosh pit] against their will and really raped. From my vantage point, it looked initially like there was a struggle, and after that there were other people holding them down. It seemed like most of the crowd around was cheering them on. (Police)

We may here recall Nietzsche’s comments made in his genealogy of the Dionysian, his description of its pre-Greek, barbarian past in festivals which “centered in extravagant sexual licentiousness, whose waves overwhelmed all family life and its venerable traditions; the most savage natural instincts were unleashed, including even that horrible mixture of sensuality and cruelty which has always seemed to me to be the real witches’ brew” (BoT 39).
However, this same internally-focused brutality, in which the violence of the crowd is turned inward on itself, exists not only amongst the anonymity of the mass event, but is present even in decidedly smaller brands of performance. In his article/interview “GG Allin, The First Amendment, and the Law,” Joe Coughlin relays a summary description of the notoriously violent performances of since-deceased punk nihilist GG Allin to include nudity, bloodshed, onstage defecation (which Allin frequently eats and/or flings at the crowd), and the very real threat of personal injury; people do tend to panic, after all, and scramble for doors, among other things. Most of the blood, however, is Allin's own, drawn usually by his own hand. He pummels his face with microphones or shoves them up his ass, cracks bottles over his head and carves himself up with the remnants, dives into furniture, you name it. Often, the uninitiated will attack him as well, but Allin's immunity to pain invariably sends them scurrying. (Allin)

Describing the nature and value of his performances during an interview on the Jerry Springer Show on May 5, 1993, Allin casually declares with Nietzschean conviction his beneficent role in harming others: “If you get raped at my show, you’re probably better off for it” (Jerry). Allin revels in his self-confessedly mercenary and unrelenting view of human relations, steadfastly objecting to any sense of communion with individual or audience in either private or performance domains (Allin).

In terms of contemporary musical performance, there does not exist, for audience and performer alike, a more definitive and consistently recurring incarnation of danger than a GG Allin show. Each performance explicitly, and rather paradoxically, centers on constructing a space of unrestrained freedom, and thus, in Nietzschean fashion, embraces the malice erupting within it: negative liberty finds no ground amidst the Dionysian scene. Indeed, the Dionysian is just the opposite: it is the space which affirms all possibilities associated with intensity, including acts of cruelty. However, within this absence of constraint, its positive corollary enjoys a run of the full gamut of possibilities, forever expressing itself in entirely
unpredictable ways: here, it erupts in the terror of violence and sexual assault, but elsewhere fosters a more nurturing sense of community.

**Affirming Culture: The Articulation of Community**

In order to understand the manner in which musical performance can bind an otherwise fragmented crowd of people, a rather detailed account of the event and those attending—including a description of the time prior to and following the actual performance—is necessary. Without a sense of these details, we risk a rather uninformative reiteration of the long-asserted maxim that music has the power to bind people together, and possibly forego what may be a rare opportunity to gain a more thorough grasp of this enigmatic process. Providing a clear example of exactly this power, Barbara Andersen, former editor of Vancouver's *Discorder* magazine, recollects a specific performance of The Need which closed the first night of a three-day conference for young feminist activists in Seattle, Washington in the summer of 1996:

*DiPasquale:* Describe to me the circumstances of The Need show in Seattle.

*Andersen:* The show was actually on the first night of a three-day conference at an activist community centre.... There were not a lot of older women or minority women.... There were a few tables set up and people selling, or rather, disseminating things.... I think it was uncomfortable for everybody because nobody knew what was supposed to be going on.... There were various discussions and bands that were mostly pretty bad.... There were maybe 20 or 30 people at the place at the peak.... [The Need] had some fans who had come just to see them, who hadn't been there earlier, who were older, and kind of more flamboyant, and more dressed up, and more multi-ethnic than the crowd was at that point, and were very loud and aggressively supportive. So they set up in the middle of the room instead of at the back of one of the walls like the other bands had done.... So they played, and people got really excited about it.... They had the audience in a circle around them.... People just got really super amped and were jumping around.... It was all women at that point.... The music was good but they made mistakes all the time, and whenever they would make mistakes they would stop the song and start back at the beginning or stop it altogether.... So it was very chaotic and ruptured music that didn't have any long ecstatic periods, but I think that made it more exciting. It was also very different from a lot of the bands we were hearing that weekend.... You could tell they were trying to do something experimental.

*D:* So did their performance change the mood of the conference in any way?

*A:* It made it worth sitting around and being incredibly bored for hours and I was in a much better mood than when I started.... It was fun and it also broke the ice with a lot of people
who were there, and I got to talking to them and having a friendly-ish rapport with them and it made it possible to sort of develop relationships.

*D:* How do you think that happened?

*A:* I think it just lightened the mood. Watching bands that aren’t very good or entertaining is kind of like work, and in the context of this conference where it was kind of like supporting each other, it was like you were doing your job by standing there and clapping or being excited or just standing there and watching the band.... A lot of those bands are hard to evaluate outside of that context, that community context, or that community social work perspective [laughs].

*D:* What was it about The Need’s performance that sparked this conference into a place where people became a little more comfortable with one another? How do you suspect that their performance broke the ice?

*A:* I think the fans that they brought or that showed up just for them were important because they were kind of goofy and outspoken and they maybe provided models for behaviour that people didn’t have, like that you didn’t have to be deadly serious, and you could heckle the band and you weren’t going to hurt their feelings and make them cry, you could actually joke around and act silly and that everyone had to loosen up a bit. And so they loosened people up.... There’s also an understandable amazement that even women who are involved in feminist art have when they see women who are either very technically skilled or very creatively driven, who have a very forceful vision. A lot of the music that was being made in that community was very same-ey... and muddy, and maybe kind of wishy-washy, like it didn’t really know where it was going—it didn’t really have to go anywhere because it was just the act of making music that was the statement in the first place. It was more important that it was women making it than the actual content of the music. That was what things were being evaluated on the basis of. [The Need] weren’t incredibly technically skilled, but they were original, which was amazing.

According to Andersen, The Need’s performance—with its comparative originality, presence, and strength of vision—changed the mood of the conference from an uneasy boredom to at least a space of relative social ease. Aesthetically, it articulated, in a way that perhaps language was unable to, a commonality they shared and a purpose for their conference. However, as she contends, the band’s refusal to play through their mistakes meant that their performance offered no extended periods of musical ecstasis and that its success was as much due to the participation of a few boisterous audience members as it was their ventures into experimentalism. Andersen describes a scene of visible excitement, and even its physical expression from the audience, but nowhere in her comments is the suggestion that this performance initiated, in Nietzschean terms, anything as radical as a
return to nature, a return to the primordial home. It seems, rather, that it was actually an intensification of presence in the world of culture, indeed, an articulation of exactly their place as a specific community within a culture that took place during this performance. Andersen’s description of this particular musical space thus sits rather restlessly within a Nietzschen framework of musical performance, demanding greater breadth to account for the myriad contingencies suggested in her analysis.

**Stress Fractures: Nietzsche’s Conflicts**

As a result of the Apollinian/Dionysian strife, there is still, in terms of human agency, an undeniable tension between an individual and a collective intoxication in Nietzsche’s work. Nietzsche’s account points to an exertion and increase of individual strength while simultaneously partaking in a collective transformation gesturing towards homogenization. As Nietzsche observes in *The Will to Power*:

> The condition of pleasure called intoxication is precisely an exalted feeling of *power*— The sensations of space and time are altered: tremendous distances are surveyed and, as it were, for the first time apprehended; the extension of vision over greater masses...; strength as a feeling of dominion in the muscles, as suppleness and pleasure in movement, as dance, as levity and *presto*.... (WP 420-1)

And yet, another sketch of Nietzsche’s thoughts on musical performance sends a message of subordination:

> The will to unity (because unity tyrannizes—namely, over the listener, spectator); but inability to tyrannize over oneself concerning the main thing—namely in regard to the work itself (omitting, shortening, clarifying, simplifying). Overwhelming through masses (Wagner, Victor Hugo, Zola, Taine). (WP 448)

Although the Nietzschen model articulates the volatility and intensity of a collective, communal experience, the complexity and diversity of such expressions—being composed from out of a host of personal, cultural, and historical contingencies—expands beyond the scope of this model’s binary oppositions. Nietzsche’s vacillating descriptions of the Apollinian and Dionysian forces, and his still uneasy settlement on the dissonance of their
coupling in *The Birth of Tragedy*, betray a cognizance of this tension, but even in his recognition that the musical rapture of Dionysus remains framed *within* and *by* the cultural milieu of Apollo, Nietzsche's account gives only the provisional suggestion of culture as a mediating force in the musical possession itself, overlooking the finer details of its operation and focusing only on the moments of its apparent exodus. Although he himself revels in this transcendence as a partial destabilization of the dichotomy itself, the notion that the listener oscillates exclusively between nature and culture, wholly leaving the one to be in the other, is a somewhat crude model. Without question, there is a strong, transformative quality in the musical event, out of which new possibilities of communication can be realized; but rather than marking or preserving these kinds of dualities, it ought to be conceived as illuminating a simultaneous experience of both, or perhaps of suggesting a temporary fusion. It is the destructuring of these sorts of dichotomies that Heidegger is able to achieve in *Being and Time*. Probing his more developed hermeneutics with an attention to the shortcomings of Nietzsche's model can contribute to a richer understanding of musical experience not as an escape from, but rather, an illumination *of* this 'world of culture'.

Nietzsche's understanding of Dionysian rapture as an ecstatic bliss in which one stands temporarily outside of oneself, as a climactic puncturing of civilization's veil in which one regains an affiliation with a more primordial, collective nature, though in its own manner a reveling in the destructuring of Cartesian dichotomies is for Heidegger still exemplary of the strongest metaphysical prejudice, an inverted Platonism which merely extols the sensuous in displacement of the supersensuous ideal. In many ways, Heidegger is quite justified in describing Nietzsche as "the last metaphysician of the West" (WPKM 8). Indeed, for Heidegger, upholding the notion that one could enjoy the kind of possession and collapse
described by Nietzsche would necessarily presuppose the positing of its opposite: a state of unmediated and unadulterated being, a static, Platonic purity.

Still, even with this perpetual tension at every turn, Nietzsche has managed to place us inside the musical event, has suggested that the site of performance is one of collective audience communication as much as it is one of individual aesthetic delight. And although it is generally phrased in terms of internal drives, Nietzsche does address a certain corporeal element in this sense of communion with other listeners. Perhaps the greatest element in his analysis of music is the sense that its value is consummate with the degree of departure from the everyday—music is capable of catalyzing a space of unpredictable and unique social relations for some period of time.

Even while retaining the vital components in Nietzsche’s model of performance, an examination of Heidegger’s hermeneutics of listening, mood, attunement, and art can destabilize the Nietzschean conflict paradigm that, as Andersen’s example has shown, obstructs a more differentiated understanding of the musical event. There is in musical experience—and perhaps in the Dionysian itself—a broader range of possibilities, a wider horizon of the primordial, that Heidegger will articulate in his discussion of listening.
CHAPTER III

HEIDEGGER'S AURALITY

Heidegger as Musical Thinker

Vastly different as they are stylistically, Heidegger’s own philosophical focus shows a clear respect for Nietzsche’s philosophical approach. Evident not only from his systematic four-volume work on Nietzsche but also visible more generally in his re-visitation of certain themes, Heidegger is (especially in Being and Time), like Nietzsche, concerned with problems of interpretation in terms of everyday experience. Everyday aural experience is one of the themes Heidegger re-visits throughout his philosophical career, urging a re-acquaintance with the often-overlooked world of sound. However, germane to our cultural-historical blind spot in relation to the sonic is the lack of attention paid to Heidegger’s own provisional hermeneutics of listening appearing in his texts. Despite his comments on acoustic experience in Being and Time, “The Origin of the Work of Art,” “The Way to Language,” as well as “Logos”—a theme spanning a significant portion of his philosophical career—a more developed theory of Heidegger’s aurality in relation to the musical event has yet to be constructed. While Ihde’s exploration into the phenomenology of listening certainly furthers our understanding of Heidegger’s acoustic sensibilities, he stops short of combining it with Heidegger’s descriptions of being-with in Being and Time, and community in “The Origin of the Work of Art.” As will become clear as our analysis moves on, some critics like John R. Covach, Richard Cochrane, and Michael Eldred see how Heidegger’s hermeneutics can be applied specifically to a more contextual model of music, but none observe how his work may coalesce into an important, detailed theory of audience relations in musical
performance. Indeed, it is not immediately obvious that this could ever be a successful enterprise: Heidegger never really engages with music in any rigorous fashion.

Heidegger takes a much different approach to sonic experience than Nietzsche, not investigating music with quite the same explicitness or intensity, but certainly gesturing towards a kind of quiescent musicality in everyday listening. It is clear that Heidegger does not ‘know’ music in the manner Nietzsche does: from the inside out, as a composer of at least passable merit. Nevertheless, in clear contra-distinction to the visual, geometric epistemology of Descartes, Heidegger urges a re-acquaintance with the often-neglected world of sound as part of our ‘knowledge.’ This is not to suggest that Heidegger derides our sense of sight as inherently inauthentic, or somehow responsible for our contemporary (Cartesian) interpretation of Being, but there is a noticeable sonic motif running through his work that evinces an increasing sensitivity and thoughtfulness towards human listening, an engagement with sound not often found in the works of other philosophers. Outlining this general trajectory of Heidegger’s aurality in his book, Poetic Thinking: An Approach to Heidegger, David Halliburton declares his ambition to examine “the meaning of Heidegger’s growing concern with music, with dance, with the language of gesture, with Eastern modes of thinking and presentation” (200).

Indeed, entwined within Heidegger’s discussions of some of his most major themes—communication, mood, belonging, and truth—are strands of this aurality. Tracing the development of his acoustic sensibility not only reveals its explicit presence at some of the most pivotal moments of his thought, but as the fundamental metaphor for his project of destructuring the antinomies of metaphysics. Despite his infamous Kehre, his turn away from a single, unified understanding of Being and towards a more pluralistic, differentiated idea of
more localized human practices, he never stopped pursuing new, imaginative formulations to
challenge the disjunctive picture of human experience erected by Western metaphysics
(Dreyfus, HFSAP). And although it is generally assumed that Heidegger’s thought can be
divided according to this turn, with the theme of human listening he remains remarkably
consistent, at times giving near-verbatim repetitions of his earlier formulations. The change
in his acoustic sensibility can only be expressed as an intensified interest, not as a departure.
If, cursorily, we consider that sound is transient and immersive, that music catalyzes an
ecstatic unity amongst its listeners, and that listening is receptivity, Heidegger’s affinity for
the sonic, as becoming, as unifying, as unbidden, seems rather appropriate: hearing is the
sense that overcomes distance. It is this de-severance that is, as Halliburton contends, the
essence of Heidegger’s ‘poetic thinking’:

The strain, and hence the pathos of Heidegger’s poetic thinking, arises partly from the desire
to evoke a sense of the unity of things that has been turned, by metaphysics, into a disunity
and opposition; hence, by the measure of metaphysics, the resulting discourse must itself
appear contradictory. (19)

Listing more specifically the various facets of this project, Schürmann counts Heidegger’s
attentiveness to the aural among his integral aims:

The same methodic retreat makes it necessary to dismiss the dualism of subject and object; to
construe phenomenology as interpretation rather than reflection; to follow the arrival and
withdrawal of things in the horizon of world instead of remaining riveted to entities constantly
present; to sap the prestige of seeing over hearing; finally, to deconstruct the theories of the
constitution of universals for consciousness. (69-70)

In first tracing Heidegger’s aurality and then extending his understanding of human listening
into his own description of the art event, the hegemonies of metaphysics which have been
named as the underpinning of an impoverished model of musical performance from the
outset can be destructured and replaced with a more comprehensive, contextual, and
differentiated account of the musical event. In every component of this analysis—in
listening, communication, being-with others, and art as event—mood and attunement emerge
as the central themes of inquiry and must therefore be comprehensively understood from the outset, if a coherent synthesis of his earlier and later thought is to be achieved in a final model of performance.

**Primordial Being-in-the-World**

From the outset of *Being and Time*, Heidegger provides recurring reminders as to the importance of taking the primordial, the elemental, the primary, as the horizon of his examination. These 'modes of being,' formerly associated by Nietzsche with Dionysian rapture now become quite radically displaced amidst Heidegger's hermeneutics: access to the primordial is no longer only possible through cataclysmic intoxication, but is instead permeated throughout Dasein's everyday being-in-the-world. There is a sense in which this theme of primordiality rests within his greater ontological project in somewhat corollary fashion. Like Nietzsche's Dionysian 'ground of existence,' the function of the primordial in Heidegger can likewise be characterized in terms of its transparency, not in the sense of clarity and explicit presence, but just the opposite: like a pane of glass which makes visible the landscape outside, but must itself recede from view; it is crucial, perpetually operative, but invisible, and thus concealed from ready apprehension. Heidegger is, however, more forthcoming in addressing the enigmatic nature of his ontological project as it relates to his understanding of phenomenological method. Heidegger takes the brute possibility of even posing the question of Being to suggest that we are already operating with at least a provisional sense about the proper horizon of inquiry, a vague glimpse of phenomenological procedure that will maneuver from within, and thus illuminate, Dasein "as it is proximally and for the most part—in its average everydayness" (BT 37-8). Through a phenomenological investigation, Heidegger seeks to "arrive at those primordial experiences in which we
achieved our first ways of determining the nature of Being—the ways which have guided us ever since” (BT 44). Heidegger’s project then, in terms of primordiality, is thus to examine this primary and perpetual mode of interpretation to uncover its structure in its functioning ‘transparency.’

Conveying this kind of elemental, accessible understanding, Heidegger’s comments on Dasein and temporality in Division Two of Being and Time are perhaps illustrative of such a primordial focus. As Heidegger wishes to re-institute Dasein’s circadian reference to time, “the ‘then’ with which Dasein concerns itself gets dated in terms of something which is connected with getting bright, and which is connected with it in the closest kind of environmental involvement—namely, the rising of the sun” (BT 414). As John Sallis puts it in his book, Echoes: After Heidegger:

[S]uch a dating is distinctively public: it introduces a publicly available measure, the sun, a “natural clock,” which then motivates the production of clocks in the usual sense. It is thus that Dasein’s reckoning with time is, first of all, neither environmental nor mathematical but rather astronomical, solar, taking its measure from the sky. (68)

True, any precise sense of the primordial still remains (and will perhaps always remain) rather apocryphal, but from this example we can see that Heidegger’s focus does indeed illuminate those normally ‘transparent’ foundations of our everyday interpretations such that they at least take on a kind of translucent presence: quietly and constantly, the kind of light that shines at each moment situates us within a certain space in the trajectory of our day.

The task for a primordial understanding of sound is then to employ Heidegger’s phenomenological method, with its vague yet expansive horizon of primordiality, in order to regain our more elemental affiliation with the sonic, one since concealed by the pervasive scientism of the contemporary ‘world-picture.’ As Nietzsche expresses the Dionysian in terms of music, this primordiality indeed becomes available through Heidegger’s aurality:
It is on the basis of this potentiality for hearing, which is existentially primary, that anything like hearkening [Horchen] becomes possible. Hearkening is phenomenally still more primordial than what is defined 'in the first instance' as “hearing” in psychology—the sensing of tones and the perceptions of sounds. Hearkening too has the kind of Being of the hearing which understands. (BT 207)

Heidegger’s acoustic primordiality, like Nietzsche’s Dionysian, is permeated with a language of access and immediacy, but it is also something that is at once mysteriously concealed through its concomitant mistrust—it has been, in a sense, repressed. However, the sheer scope of Heidegger’s primordiality flattens and extends that of Nietzsche. It is in this foundation of Dasein’s primordial hearing that Heidegger’s acoustic horizon caps Nietzsche’s peaks of musical ecstasy. Rarely in an appropriately ‘artificial and complicated frame of mind to hear a pure noise,’ Dasein’s sonic possession, its attunement with a meaningful world of sound, is all but perpetual, and thus, in its own ecstatic libration, bisects the baseline purity of Nietzsche’s non-ecstatic world of culture and the escalating rapture of his ecstatic world of nature—phenomenological listening becomes our point of access to a much broader understanding of the primordial (BT 207). Despite Derrida’s critique of Heidegger’s phonocentrism in his Of Grammatology, a temporary re-ordering of the senses in which a phenomenologically-based hearing plays a primary role will allow us to re-visit and re-interpret the Dionysian in a contemporary context.

The Place of Sound and Mood in Being and Time

In order to follow his aurality properly, to understand all the various extensions that Heidegger’s account of human listening can provide for a more differentiated understanding of musical performance, it is first necessary to have a sense of his general aim in Being and Time, as he seeks to lay bare the structure of Dasein as ‘thrown projection,’ as the being that finds itself already in a world that demands it continually interpret itself and its world ‘as’ something (BT 185).
The crux of Heidegger’s project in his magnum opus of 1926, Being and Time, is to destabilize the various dichotomies—mind/body, subject/object, nature/culture, theory/practice, etc.—associated with our Cartesian world-view, a framework so deeply ingrained that it now enjoys all the natural immediacy of common sense. Heidegger criticizes the history of Western metaphysics with its inquiry only into, as he puts it, the ‘Being of beings’ and urges us to re-discover, to again think about, the forgotten question of ‘Being’ itself. At the outset Heidegger asserts that, in order to challenge this metaphysics, he wishes to raise a different question, the question of a proper ontology which will be performed from out of a different methodological approach. Heidegger rejects the methods of traditional ontology which have been used to study only the Being of beings—as bracketed off from the everyday—in order to yield some indubitable foundation for human knowledge. Instead, Heidegger turns toward a methodology that will focus on our being-involved with, and our comportment towards, objects and entities in the everyday world as they show themselves in the context of such encountering—for Heidegger, this is phenomenology. Rather than focus on the objects themselves, positing them (as Descartes does) as distinct, separate, space-time locations, Heidegger wishes to make the very context, the relationships between, the being-involved with, his subject of inquiry.

Heidegger believes that, prior to theory and theorizing, the world is intelligible upon a complex background of shared practices, our ‘being-in-the-world,’ and cannot be sufficiently understood within these Cartesian dichotomies. His examination from within these practices shows that, although it is possible to engage with objects from a distanced perspective of pure beholding, that is, to study the Being of beings, this is actually a derivative mode of encountering that only seems like the most immediate and natural way of apprehending
because Being has been so systematically misinterpreted as something static, as constant presence-at-hand. More common during one's day is to be involved in shared practices, to cope, to comport oneself towards objects and other human beings without any strong evidence that supports a constant theorizing about one's activity; in terms of objects, things do not show up with the estranged purity of a 'mere' object-thing, but rather, first and for the most part as the familiar and ready-to-hand. As Dasein, we are always interpreting the world, always taking "something as something" and thus, in terms of our sonic interpretations, are not generally in the "very artificial and complicated frame of mind to hear a 'pure noise'" but instead hear the sound of the ready-to-hand: we hear the "motorcycle as a motorcycle" (BT 189, 206,7). Heidegger describes this immediacy in "The Origin of the Work of Art": "Much closer to us than all sensations are the things themselves" (152). To use Ihde's terms, Heidegger attempts to retract sound from the 'realm of mute objects,' and once again let it speak as a worldly phenomenon. As described from the outset of this discussion, our seemingly innocuous interpretations of sound and music as things present-at-hand has been shown to have profound effect on the social relations of musical performance—understanding this immediacy of sound and music as ready-to-hand will contribute significantly to the overcoming of the metaphysical distance responsible for the contemporary picture of performance thus ingrained.

For Heidegger, this kind of everyday encountering is as radically historical as Dasein's own existentiell understanding of itself at any particular moment: transient, as the present arises out of a particular past in terms of some possible future. As a historicized and historicizing entity which interprets, Dasein discloses its world not in a mode of detached, theoretical reflection but from within the scope of its ever-present moods, those states that
allow the world to show up ‘as something’ at all. As Hubert L. Dreyfus puts it in his book, *Being-in-the-World*, as this entity which is attuned moodwise to its world, Dasein always encounters things “in some specific way, as attractive, threatening, interesting, boring, frustrating, etc.” (175). Indeed, it is through the anarchic uncertainty of these moods that the ready-to-hand, and thus the sounds of those familiar entities, will show up as mattering:

Under the strongest pressure and resistance, nothing like an affect would come about, and the resistance itself would remain essentially undiscovered, if Being-in-the-world, with its state-of-mind, had not already submitted itself [sich schon angewiesen] to having entities within-the-world “matter” to it in a way which its moods have outlined in advance.... It is precisely when we see the ‘world’ unsteadily and fitfully in accordance with our moods, that the ready-to-hand shows itself in its specific worldhood, which is never the same from day to day. (BT 177)

Heidegger is prepared to declare this pre-cognitive immediacy of mood more primary, more acute, and more thorough than the subsequent rational theorizing generally privileged as the process of true understanding: “[T]he possibilities of disclosure which belong to cognition reach far too short a way compared with the primordial disclosure belonging to moods, in which Dasein is brought before its Being as ‘there’” (BT 173). This distinction between the phenomenological priority of mood and the derivative quality of that kind of beholding which makes a concerted effort to diminish its role in interpretation—to isolate sound and music from their context—will prove key in executing our critique of acoustics and aesthetics alike. Heidegger’s hermeneutics, moreover, can also help us articulate, in a much more profound manner, the positions of those critics who are clearly on the trail of a phenomenological understanding of aural experience.

**Resonance: An Attunement to Context**

In asserting Dasein and world as a relationship of attunement, Heidegger sets himself apart from the philosophical tradition which, in its interpretation of being as constant presence, could only portray the uncertainty and capriciousness of mood as an obstacle to be
overcome, to be, as much as possible, cast aside so that an objective observer might observe an objective world. But, for Heidegger, this objectivity of either Dasein or world is an illusion: moods (and Dasein’s thrownness into a world that has been interpreted for it already) inform the nature of our everyday interpretations to a much greater extent than we may be willing to accept. Countering this underestimation of mood, Dreyfus contends that “far from being fleeting as the tradition has supposed, moods settle in like the weather and tend to perpetuate themselves. For example, when I am annoyed, new events, even those which when I am joyful show up as challenging or amusing, show up as grounds for further annoyance” (BiW 174). The pervasiveness and constancy of these various moods make for a fundamental difficulty in discerning, with absolute precision, their respective natures and the manner in which they influence, or perhaps, constitute, our interpretations, but “in every case Dasein always has some mood” (BT 173). Like Cartesian accounts of objects as things present-at-hand, analogous theories of sound—in psychoacoustics and music theory alike—seeking to forge an inextricable link between specific sounds and specific affects ignore this phenomenological (and thus equivocal) ground of interpretation that is almost always at play. In fact, it is this kind of mechanistic theory of correspondence [Übereinstimmung] that Heidegger seeks to undermine through a discussion of the interrelationship of voice [Einstimme] and mood [Stimmung] as a ‘felt sense’ or attunement [Befindlichkeit]. In his book, Poetics of Resistance, Michael Roth quotes a key passage from Heidegger’s essay, “What is Philosophy?”, in which he insists, somewhat paradoxically, that the precision of correspondence is founded on attunement:

Philosophia is the expressly accomplished correspondence which speaks insofar as it considers the appeal of the Being of being. The correspondence listens to the voice of the appeal. What appeals to us as the voice [Stimme] of Being evokes our correspondence.... Being as such determines speaking in such a way that language is attuned (accorder) to the Being of being. Correspondence is necessary and... always attuned [gestimmtes], and not just
accidentally and occasionally. It is an attunement [Gestimmtheit]. And only on the basis of the attunement (disposition) does the language of correspondence obtain its precision, its tuning [Be-stimmtheit]. As something tuned and attuned [ge-stimmtes und be-stimmtes], correspondence really exists in a tuning [Stimmung]. (131)

At once eschewing the rigidity of conventional notions of correspondence and yet still retaining an adequate connectedness, it is Heidegger’s appeal to our acoustic sensibilities of attunement that immediately enriches our sense of correspondence as a relation that we free according to the contingencies of interpretation. As the etymologies of the words associated with ‘attunement’ suggest, it is through mood [Stimmung] that this resonance is felt.

Heidegger’s acoustic world, then, is one that is composed out of many different voices that converge with and resonate with many different moods—not correspondence between word and thing, but a contingent and ephemeral event as a coming-into resonance with a voiced mood, as a relation with a context. Indeed, it is because our hearing so acutely places us ‘somewhere’—physically and existentially—that Heidegger exploits a number of telling etymologies in the German which elicit this essential link between hearing and situatedness. Later in his career, in “Logos,” Heidegger offers the reader the strikingly close connection between the verb hören (to listen) and the verb gehören (to belong). In Being and Time, however, he chooses to exploit the express musicality and aurality in the ‘Stimm-’ root (referring to voicing, tuning) of Stimmung (now mood, but originally referring to the tuning of a musical instrument) together with the ‘befind’ root (referring to place, situatedness) in order to convey the essential notion that it is as mood that Dasein is attuned to itself in its context:

An entity of the character of Dasein is its “there” in such a way that, whether explicitly or not, it finds itself [sich befindet] in its thrownness. In an attunement [Befindlichkeit] Dasein is always brought before itself, and has always found itself, not in the sense of coming across itself by perceiving itself, but in the sense of finding itself in the mood that it has [gestimmtes Sichbefinden]. (174)
(Here, and hereafter, Macquarrie and Robinson's periodic translation of *Stimmung* and *Befindlichkeit* as 'state-of-mind' shall instead be rendered as 'mood' or 'attunement' in order to preserve the musical overtones in the German.) In his book, *The Role of Mood in Heidegger's Ontology*, Bruce W. Ballard is able to gather precisely the essential aspects of mood as this contextualization:

In Heidegger’s own use of the ‘Stimm-’ stem, the musical meaning is undoubtedly primary. The most important point to be gathered from this usage is that attunement is always being tuned to. Attunement is only possible as a relation within a context. As a basic state of Dasein then, it expresses an essential contextualization, Being-there. The musical tuning metaphor also brings out the pre-cognitive, pre-intellectual nature of mood. (28)

With mood as the nexus of his notion of interpretation, Heidegger formulates a situated understanding of everyday acoustic experience that can be extended into an equally contextual understanding of musical performance. Not only central to interpretation generally, but also—as intimated in the etymological history of the German *Stimmung* as the tuning of a musical instrument—of paramount importance to a discussion of acoustic experience, mood plays a major role in those components of Heidegger’s thought that will prove most useful for our discussion: listening, communication, musical listening, and being-with others (BT 172 f.3). Indeed, mood is the language of our attunement as being-in-the-world, our most elemental and primordial means of disclosure. Understanding its importance in Dasein’s being-in-the-world, aurality is thus the central concern of Heidegger’s analysis of communication as shared attunement (*MitBefindlichkeit*) in *Being and Time*. His assertion of communication as this socially available, shared understanding suggests a model that can be later applied in formulating the operations of a collective attunement during musical performance.
Listening as Openness, Communication as Shared Attunement

Heidegger's notion of communication functions much differently than contemporary models espoused by philosophers camped on either side of the internalism/externalism debate, whose models rely on the subject/object distinction and the notion that 'word-things' are used to express intentional states between such subjects. Heidegger explicitly challenges this common explanation, contending that "communication is never anything like a conveying of experiences, such as opinions or wishes, from the interior of one subject into the interior of another" (BT 205). Instead of focusing on the beliefs, desires, and intentional states of individuals as expressing a strict correspondence between word and thing, Heidegger understands the possibility of communication as grounded in its public life as discourse: "The existential foundation of language is discourse or talk" (BT 203). And although the discursive communication Heidegger describes is certainly the most common, everyday kind of occurrence, its ontologico-existential structure includes the rich complexity of any oral discourse: the musicality of speech, being-with others, mood, hearing, and silence. While, as Heidegger states, "Language can be broken up into word-Things which are present-at-hand," this does not offer, as he will later put it in The Basic Problems of Phenomenology, an adequate understanding of its worldly operation (BT 204; my gloss):

Language is not identical with the sum total of all the words printed in a dictionary; instead, because language, so far as it is, is as the Dasein is, because it exists, it is historical. (208)

Heidegger continually resists the kind of stability these abstractions would offer, and instead always stresses the ephemerality and contingency of language's worldly existence—indeed, it is the aspects and operations of these situated voicings that Heidegger attempts to account for in his analysis of discourse. Ong, in his examination of oral communication, is equally as
adamant to resist the rigidity of linguistic meaning, and his critique offers a provisional sense of how this worldliness is, in part, constituted:

The oral mind is uninterested in definitions. Words acquire their meanings only from their always insistent actual habitat, which is not, as in a dictionary, simply other words, but includes also gestures, vocal inflections, facial expressions, and the entire human, existential setting in which the real, spoken word also occurs. (47)

While the physicality of gestures and facial expressions will most certainly be an important component in examining audience relations later as we examine Foucault, Ong’s intimation of the musicality of speech or ‘vocal inflections’ opens up the possibility to first analyze how this musical component works to appropriate what is, for Heidegger, the essential aspect of discourse, namely, mood. Asserting the explicit musicality of these ‘vocal inflections,’ Truax declares that

[p]eople usually refer to this aspect of spoken language by such terms as “voice quality”; or “tone of voice,” or simply “it’s not what you say, but how you say it.”... Sometimes it is called the “musical” aspect of speech, because it involves inflection (pitch contours), rhythm, phrasing, emphasis (or accent), punctuation, timbre (or sound quality), silence (rests), and even cadences—exactly those variables which are used to describe a single voice melody. (33)

A slightly different formulation of the vernacular mantra Truax describes above (‘it’s not what you say…’), Heidegger is explicit to declare these aspects of speech, its musical aspects, to be the ‘indicator’ of mood in everyday discourse as well as the essential domain of ‘poetical’ communication:

Being-in and its attunement [des befindlichen] are made known in discourse and indicated in language by intonation, modulation, the tempo of the talk, ‘the way of speaking.’ In ‘poetical’ discourse, the communication of the existential possibilities of one’s mood [Befindlichkeit] can become an aim in itself. (BT 205)

Despite the possible Cartesian overtones in this arc of ‘poetical discourse,’ that is, in the suggestion of intentional content in his remarks about the ‘communication… of one’s mood,’ Heidegger is generally quite vigilant to portray mood not as something first held by one and then conveyed to another, but rather as something reciprocally appropriated out of the
hermeneutic of being-in-the-world as being-with. Indeed, the first glimpse of the true radicality in Heidegger’s analysis is his avowal that all these contingencies of oral discourse themselves take place within and also articulate a pre-existing ‘shared attunement’ (Mitbefindlichkeit) as being-with:

Through [discourse] a shared attunement [Mitbefindlichkeit] gets ‘shared,’ and so does the understanding of Being-with... In discourse Being-with becomes ‘explicitly’ shared; that is to say, it is already, but it is unshared as something that has not been taken hold of and appropriated. (BT 205)

Whereas common models of linguistic communication posit understanding as the result of some assertion, Heidegger recurrently stresses that understanding is something that is shared and shared already, declaring that “only if there is some co-understanding beforehand of what is said-in-the-talk... is there a possibility of estimating whether the way in which it is said is appropriate to what the discourse is about thematically” (BT 207). Dreyfus rightly names this sense of shared understanding as the key value in Heidegger’s sense of linguistic operation:

Heidegger’s important insight is that everyday communication cannot be understood on this Cartesian model of messages sent from one isolated mind to another. Heidegger would point out that such an account treats language as a context-free code. It leaves out the essential fact that linguistic communication is possible only on the background of a shared world. (BIW 221)

However, as provisionally indicated in Heidegger’s notion of attunement and his description of discourse as a foundation, this shared situatedness entails something even more radical: linguistic communication is grounded upon an understanding that is yet more primordial, as “vocal utterance... is not essential for discourse” (BT 316). Indeed, Halliburton keenly observes both the depth and breadth of Heidegger’s analysis to include not only non-linguistic forms of communication but to stress that it is in fact the pre-existing nature of understanding in being-with, as that shared attunement which already is, that allows for linguistic utterance to exist as one of the possible forms of discourse:
In discourse the act of utterance is not decisive: if I am dealing with you in a social situation, language as discourse transpires as long as I understand you, whether or not either of us speaks aloud, and I can perfectly well “hear what you are saying” in the sense of understanding what you “really” mean, even if you remain silent. (10)

Anticipating his later description of Dasein as essentially de-severant, as the entity which is disposed to bring things close, Heidegger appropriately turns his discussion towards “an existential possibility which belongs to talking itself—hearing” to explain this being-attuned to others (BT 206):

Hearing is constitutive for discourse. And just as linguistic utterance is based on discourse, so is acoustic perception on hearing. Listening to... is Dasein’s existential way of Being-open as Being with for Others. Indeed, hearing constitutes the primary and authentic way in which Dasein is open for its ownmost potentiality-for-Being. (BT 206)

Later in his career, Heidegger goes on to say explicitly what is only implied in this passage: this characteristic reversal in which ‘acoustic perception’ is ‘based on hearing’ really casts hearing in relation to belonging. Echoing his earlier formulations from Being and Time in which he describes the primordiality of proper hearing as hearkening in “Logos,” Heidegger again casts sound in this everyday familiarity as he moves towards the revealing etymological link between ‘hearing’ and ‘belonging’ (BT 207):

We do not hear because we have ears. We have ears, i.e. our bodies are equipped with ears because we hear. Mortals hear the thunder of the heavens, the rustling of the woods, the gurgling of fountains, the ringing of plucked strings, the rumbling of motors, the noises of the city—only and only so far as they always already in some way belong to them and yet do not belong to them.

We are all ears when our gathering devotes itself entirely to hearkening, the ears and the mere invasion of sounds being completely forgotten. So long as we only listen to the sound of a word, as the expression of a speaker, we are not yet even listening at all. Thus, in this way we never succeed in having genuinely heard anything at all. But when does hearing succeed? We have heard \[gehört\] when we \[gehören\] the matter addressed. (65-6)

Indeed, sounds speak of the activity of others, of events that are taking place that, even in their seeming remoteness, still in some ambiguous way include us, implicate us as part of them. Describing Henry David Thoreau’s account of sound in Walden, Sallis suggests in his
Echoes that this acoustic inclusiveness becomes most apparent during moments of seeming distance from ‘the world’:

In the chapter of *Walden* entitled “Sounds” he celebrates the undisturbed solitude and stillness of his summer reverie amidst the sounds of the woods. He tells, too, of the intrusive sound of the railroad... and he tells how even in his retreat this sound kept him linked to society. (4)

It is only in these moments of keen perspicuity and reflection, often in concert with somewhat extraneous circumstances, that sound even comes to be considered a key voice in our sense of belonging. And perhaps nowhere is this role more strikingly and tragically felt than in those whose worlds have been so radically altered by a severe loss of hearing. Describing one particular study of the patients in the Deshon Army Hospital, in his essay, “The Sonic Environment of Cities,” Michael Southworth relays the overwhelming sense of loss and separation which followed as a result of their deafness:

Their life was a ceaseless pantomime in which it was difficult to maintain the feeling of being part of the world. Loss of sound had cut important links with life and they felt detached. The world seemed dead and had lost its forward motion; it was much less demanding and nervous. All of them felt a poignant loss of background sounds, especially of nature, which had been almost unnoticed before deafness. They experienced great anxiety in crowds or traffic because important auditory danger cues were absent. The psychological effects of sudden deafness were more severe than those suffered by persons who had suddenly become blind. Deep depression resulted, characterized by undefined feelings of loss, lack of alertness, sadness, loneliness, and paranoid tendencies. (51)

As Heidegger attempts to convey in those passages from *Being and Time* and “Logos,” and as is apparent from the above account, sound is crucial to how we come to sense our physical and existential placement within the world. It is only now that we can understand what Heidegger proclaims at the outset of his discussion: “Discourse is existentially equiprimordial with attunement [Befindlichkeit] and understanding” (BT 203). Indeed, through an examination of Heidegger’s everyday aurality, we have gathered together all the most essential concepts for a more comprehensive model of musical performance as a space of social communication; we have, in fact, laid the groundwork to more fully understand the
complex operations of the Dionysian first offered by Nietzsche in *The Birth of Tragedy*. By retaining Heidegger’s interrelated understanding of mood, listening, and shared attunement as we continue our phenomenological critique into the domain of aesthetics, we will be able to work out—in a much more detailed manner than Nietzsche—the process of audience consolidation he describes in his account of the Dionysian.

**From the Everyday to the Musical**

> Much, from morning onward,  
> Since we became a conversation and hear from one another,  
> Have human beings undergone; but soon (we) will be song. (Hölderlin qtd. in Heidegger, WTL 424)

Included by Heidegger in his later essay, “The Way to Language,” these lines from Friedrich Hölderlin’s “Celebration of Peace” make an apt commentary not only on this particular essay, but also on the course of Heidegger’s aurality as it develops over his career, as well as the trajectory of our own project as we try to appropriate this acoustic sensibility for a better understanding of musical performance: it begins in listening and conversation, but sees on the horizon the promise of song. Following the linguistic focus of the hermeneutic tradition, Heidegger is committed to the idea that it is through the revealing openness and concealing resistance of language that the world is allowed to show up for an historical people. And while he describes humanity’s linguistic essence—including his discussion of the paramount importance of names, words, talk, saying, and speech—in many different ways, one passage from “The Origin of the Work of Art” suffices to capture the space it occupies in his thought: “Language, by naming beings for the first time, first brings beings to word and to appearance. Only this naming nominates being to their Being, from out of their Being. Such saying is a projecting of clearing, in which announcement is made of what it is that beings come into the open as” (198). Or, as he puts it more poetically in his
notoriously obscure dictum from “Letter on Humanism,” “Language is the house of Being. In its home man dwells. Those who think and those who create with words are the guardians of this home” (217). But even in this later essay, the fundamental structures of aurality—of sound and silence, hearing and listening—re-emerge as he sets out on ‘the way to language.’ After repeating his earlier mantra on the communicative power of silence from Being and Time, that “[o]ne can speak, speak endlessly, and it may all say nothing. As opposed to that, one can be silent, not speak at all, and in not speaking say a great deal,” Heidegger proceeds with an understanding of voice he has been reluctant to follow in the past, one that would cast music as the ringing of Ereignis (WTL 408):

The saying is the mode in which propriation speaks. Yet mode is meant here not so much in the sense of modus or “kind”; it is meant in the musical sense of the melos, the song that says by singing. For the saying that propriates brings what comes to presence out of its propriety to a kind of radiance; it lauds what comes to presence; that is, allows it in its essential unfolding. (WTL 424)

As voice, we move from speech to song, and in song, encounter an alighting that shines. Here too is where we will make the shift to music, where we will extend our explorations of everyday listening into musical performance. In many cases it will be a series of parallel shifts we will make, in which we will carry the knowledge and concepts from our previous investigations into further explorations of musical performance. Sound is an ephemeral event, and so too is the musical one. Sound does not primarily show itself as an object, and therefore neither does music. Sound gathers us in belongingly, and thus, so too does music. Sound matters most primordially as mood, and thus, so too does music. Discourse is not most primordially language but shared attunement, and thus, will show itself to be part of the sociality of performance. However, the phenomenological perspective which suggests, in a provisional sense, the manner in which aspects of everyday listening may contribute to an
understanding of musical listening also directs our ear to the important ways in which these two types of hearing can differ and even oscillate in their extremes.

**Sound and Source: Being-in the Music**

The most fundamental difference between the voice of the everyday and the voice of music was anticipated in Heidegger's passage on the 'radiance' of 'the saying that says by singing': in visual terms, song is an alighting, a shining that illuminates 'things' in a way that everyday sound does not. As Ihde contends, in everyday listening, “ordinarily, sounds are taken directionally. The hammering from next door is heard as from next door. The sparrow's song in the garden presents itself from the garden,” but, in contrast, the most intense moments of musical listening are marked by a blissful loss of this point-source directionality and are replaced with a sense of envelopment (LV 76):

> In the overwhelming presence of music which fills space and penetrates my awareness, not only am I momentarily taken out of myself in what is often described as a loss of self-awareness which is akin to ecstatic states, but there is a distance from things. The purity of music in its ecstatic surrounding presence overwhelms my ordinary connection with things so that I do not even primarily hear the symphony as the sounds of the instruments....

This ecstasy is also the occasion for an illusory phenomenon, the temptation toward the notion of a pure or disembodied sound. In the penetrating totality of the musical synthesis it is easy to forget the sound as the sound of the orchestra and the music floats through experience. Part of its enchantment is in obliteration of things. A counter-variable illustrates this: a philosopher friend who now knows he is going deaf told me that he first noticed this ailment when he experienced loss of interest in music. He described the music as becoming “distant... objectlike... over there apart from me.” It had begun to lose its surrounding, penetrating quality for him. (LV 77)

These are the most definitive moments of musical listening: when music takes on this immersive immediacy and becomes fully present, so massive that it ‘is’ seemingly without source. To be clear, the sounds of hammering that come ‘from next door’ and the sounds of the symphony one attends are obviously not analogous in terms of point-source spatiality or volume—the comparison is meant to illustrate the degree to which everyday listening and musical listening can differ at their extremes. As Ihde goes on to explain further, this
difference cannot be attributed exclusively to the nature of the sounds themselves, but is complicated significantly by the listening attitude within which they are heard:

[If I put myself in the “musical attitude” and listen to the [everyday] sounds as if it were music, I may suddenly find that its ordinary and strong sense of directionality, while not disappearing, recedes to such a degree that I can concentrate upon its surrounding presence. Contrarily, when listening to the orchestra and in the highest moments of musical ecstasy, I can (perversely, perhaps) by an act of will also raise the question of directionality; and while I continue to be immersed in the sound, there also emerges a strong sense of direction. (LV 76)

Indeed, this variable attitude of the listener plays a key role in determining the type of directionality and spatiality some particular music may have: one could conceivably find more musical interest in the rhythms, exhalations, and percolations of the dishwasher than in the annoying song that, as bothersome, is heard as coming from the radio. But, however mercurial the circumstances of its occurrence, this fact remains: to hear the musical at its most powerful is to hear something quite different, or perhaps, to hear something quite differently, from the sounds of the everyday. Similar examples would bear out a comparable continuum between everyday speech and song where a similarly ambiguous division exists in the centre, but is adequately clear at each extreme.

However, to extrapolate upon Heidegger’s analysis of communication in explicitly musical terms, this attuning power of music, which is to say its power to attune as mood, might here and elsewhere be easily and erroneously attributed to the music itself, and not understood in its reciprocal resonance with its context. In fact, as we continue to examine the relationship between music, mood, and event in “The Origin of the Work of Art,” the stubborn resilience of the art-object is encountered at every step.

The World as an Aesthetic Phenomenon

Based on a three-part lecture from 1936, in “The Origin of the Work of Art,” Heidegger embarks upon the general task Nietzsche first set out to accomplish in The Birth of
Tragedy: to re-visit the Greeks and their art concepts in order to re-vitalize and re-interpret art and its forces for a contemporary world bound to the precepts of aesthetics (now an aesthetics of ‘experience’ to which Nietzsche had been an enthusiastic contributor) (140). In fact, in an editor’s note to the essay, Krell contends that “[t]o some extent the whole of the present essay may be viewed as a response to the Nietzschean Der Wille zur Macht als Kunst” (OWA 193). Indeed, Heidegger’s main objective in this essay is to urge a re-evaluation of our contemporary concept of art as first determined by the rise of aesthetics in the 18th century, that is, to challenge the notion that art is something created by a self-contained, autonomous artist who wishes to express a feeling or emotion in the created work, and that this work, as such, (and this is the point to which Krell refers) exists in order to elicit sensual pleasure in the spectator. Heidegger spends a considerable amount of time discussing the essential misdirection of this starting point, clear in his assertion that we shall never unravel the mystery of art as long as this notion of its object-being is preserved. Anticipated in our preparatory remarks on the historical production of the sound object and its place in aesthetics, Heidegger (as expected) contends here that it is a metaphysics of constant presence which initiates and maintains the sovereignty over this theory of art: “The way in which aesthetics views the artwork from the outset is dominated by the traditional interpretation of all beings” (OWA 164). Indeed, while departing from his earlier texts in some important ways, Heidegger nonetheless makes explicit, though variant, gestures towards the ‘signposts’ of his earlier thought. The general structuring of the discussion, is, for example, one that unfolds in familiar accordance with that of Being and Time: a critique of metaphysics through an examination of how objects have come to show up for us at present, and how they were understood much differently by the Greeks. Following his
methodology in that text, Heidegger begins his essay by interrogating (and thus exposing) the metaphysical foundations of our various ‘thing-concepts’ so that we may first “decide whether the work is at bottom something else and not a thing at all.... That is why it is necessary to know about these thing-concepts, in order thereby to take heed of their provenance and their boundless presumption, but also of their semblance and self-evidence” (OWA 164, 157).

If the general themes of his analysis remain familiar, so too do the counter-examples he chooses to illuminate the shortcomings of traditional ontology. Despite the many discontinuities between this text and *Being and Time*, the themes of sonic experience and mood remain a marginal but crucial part of his notion of interpretation, and serve as counter-examples in precisely the same ways, and for precisely the same ends. In fact, in his opening critique of these thing-concepts, Heidegger first returns immediately to the pre-cognitive disclosure of mood, and then to the de-severance of hearing. While alleging the violence done in thematizing “the thing as a bearer of its characteristics,” Heidegger contrasts the limits of (misinterpreted) reason with the primordial perspicuity of mood, and in so doing, implicates this acuteness as a relevant voice in the dialogue on art (OWA 150):

> But in defining the essence of the thing, what is the use of a feeling, however certain, if thought alone has the right to speak here? Perhaps, however, what we call feeling or mood, here and in similar instances, is more reasonable—that is, more intelligently perceptive—because more open to Being than all that reason which, having meanwhile become *ratio*, was misinterpreted as being rational. (OWA 151)

As his deprecation of this metaphysical beholding continues into the account of the “thing as nothing but the unity of a manifold of what is given in the senses,” Heidegger repeats, almost verbatim, his earlier formulations on hearing as hearkening in *Being and Time* (OWA 151):

> We never really first perceive a throng of sensations, e.g., tones and noises, in the appearance of things—as this thing-concept alleges; rather we hear the storm whistling in the chimney, we hear the three-motored plane, we hear the Mercedes in immediate distinction from the Volkswagen. Much closer to us than all sensations are the things themselves. We hear the
door shut in the house and never hear acoustical sensations or even mere sounds. In order to hear a bare sound we have to listen away from things, divert our ear from them, i.e., listen abstractly. (OWA 151,2)

He finally closes his preamble on the inadequacy of our thing-concepts by concluding that the "distinction of matter and form is the conceptual schema which is used, in the greatest variety of ways, quite generally for all art theory and aesthetics" (OWA 153). But in attempting to thematize the essence of the artwork, to grasp, in this case, that which is "sonorous in a musical composition," we discover that the paradigm of aesthetics which prescribes interpreting the art object as this formed matter actually negates the very quality it seeks to uncover (OWA 145):

Color shines and wants only to shine. When we analyze it in rational terms by measuring its wavelengths, it is gone. It shows itself only when it remains undisclosed and unexplained. Earth thus shatters every attempt to penetrate it. It causes every merely calculating importunity upon it to turn into a destruction. This destruction may herald itself under the appearance of mastery and of progress in the form of the technical-scientific objectification of nature, but this mastery nevertheless remains an impotence of will. (OWA 172)

Heidegger neglects to provide a musical analogue to his visual example of the colour that is represented in terms of its wavelengths, but we might imagine that an analogy could be drawn between his example and the formal aspects of a score, or the sonic frequencies within a piece of music. In Heidegger's Philosophy of Art, Julian Young rightly observes that "[f]or Heidegger, then, the ultimate ground of the triumph of the aesthetic view of art is the imperialism of reason, the triumph of the view that science (in the broad, German sense), and science alone, has access to truth"—this is the thrust of Heidegger's deviations into the dominion of our various thing-concepts: to show that aesthetics is a metaphysics is a scientism (14). To demonstrate, if in the following passage from Young's book in which he first introduces, quotes, and then comments on Erwin Panofsky's definition of the aesthetic state, we replace the references to aesthetics with the equivalent term denoting the worlds of
science or philosophy, it becomes apparent that no disservice is done to a traditional understanding of any of these disciplines. In all these cases, truth is decontextualization:

What is the ‘aesthetic state’? According to the tradition Heidegger holds to be dominant in the modern age, the hallmark of the proper reception of art is, in Kant’s word, ‘disinterestedness’. Here, for example, is the famous art historian, Erwin Panofsky:

It is possible to experience every object, natural or man-made, aesthetically. We do this when we just look at it (or listen to it) without relating it, intellectually or emotionally, to anything outside itself. When a man looks at a tree from the point of view of a carpenter, he will associate it with various uses to which he might put the wood; and when he looks at it from the point of view of an ornithologist, he will associate it with the birds that might nest in it. When a man at a horse race watches the animal on which he has put his money, he will associate its performance with his desire that it may win. Only he who simply abandons himself to the object of his perception will experience it aesthetically.

On an aesthetic approach such as this, the essential thing about aesthetic experience is decontextualization. We attend to the object of perception in and for itself, abstract, that is, from every relation it may have to our intellectual and practical interests. (9-10)

Where Heidegger often appears to execute his philosophy from out of a Zen-like quiescence, in contrast to Panofsky’s prescription for this pure, nearly transcendent objectivity, Heidegger’s understanding of Dasein in its fluctuating moods looks positively turbulent. While Heidegger’s analysis of our various thing-concepts seems, at first, a wayward tangent, the substitutions performed in this passage again suggest that here, in the domain of art, ring the echoes of his poignant critique in Being and Time: if it is not first and foremost out of disinterest that Dasein encounters a meaningful world but rather most primordially and acutely out of the ‘as structure’ of mood, then the same perspectival distance prescribed by the philosopher in thematizing the object, and the scientist in thematizing nature, will be the same distance that leads us away from our most immediate affiliation with the meaning of art. And, just as Heidegger endeavours to employ a language in Being and Time that would proffer the possibility for overcoming this distance, so too does he re-interpret the decidedly visualist, distanced terms of art appreciation—viewing, spectating, seeing, looking at—into a unified and unifying term that closes this gap through the richness and polysemy of its
connotations, a word that elicits the essence of the paradoxically resolute allowance of *Gelassenheit*. Encapsulating all of this is the term ‘preserving,’ a yielding that entitles and shelters.

Although understanding the full import of this term goes well beyond phenomenological encountering, one important aspect of its negative definition was foreshadowed in his earlier comments on the stubborn withdrawal of art under the specious dominion of science: “Most of all, knowledge in the manner of preserving is far removed from that merely aestheticizing connoisseurship of the work’s formal aspects, its qualities and charms” (OWA 193). Following Heidegger, John R. Covach notes in his article, “Destructuring Cartesian Dualism in Musical Analysis,” that the sensibility of this latter methodology is—as we have seen at every stage along the sound-music continuum—determined by the thoroughgoing guidance of the isolated acoustic object:

> [M]usic theorists and analysts tend to assume that the musical work is an object, even if it is a richly faceted one. We have a tendency to “measure” works according to objective standards: on the most fundamental level we speak of intervals, rhythms, or timbres—all aspects of the physical make-up of sounds that can be measured empirically. Other aspects of music that are less physically tangible—such as form, harmony, counterpoint, voice leading, and motive—are sometimes thought of as if they were physical properties that operate according to certain kinds of laws. (Covach)

Also appropriating Heidegger in order to destabilize this understanding, Don Ihde and Thomas F. Slaughter assert the derivative nature of these interpretations and argue, instead, for the phenomenological foundation of musical experience in their article, “Studies in the Phenomenology of Sound: Listening”:

> “I hear an octave,” or, “that is a chord composed of A# and F,” are examples of statements which may mistake a conceptual classification for direct description. “That is a loud noise,” or, “That’s screechy,” are examples of the ordinary response prior to phenomenological reduction. (233)

Even as the musically educated can, in precise and rigorous terms, explain the anatomy of a ‘screechy,’ and perhaps therefore ‘eerie,’ or ‘grating’ phrase, this ‘worldly’ interpretation of
its character—as eerie, as grating—remains the elemental ground of meaningful musical experience, and is, from the very outset, the motive behind a technical discussion of its constituent aspects. Considered in exactly this context of a musical primordiality, an earlier quote from Heidegger’s discussion on the disclosure of mood in *Being and Time* asserts that this trajectory of meaning is impossible to reverse: “Pure beholding, even if it were to penetrate to the innermost core of the Being of something present-at-hand, *could never discover anything like that which is threatening*” (BT 177; my gloss). It is only in its ‘worldly’ character that music initiates the most intense moments of its appreciation: great pains must be undertaken to conceal that which most immediately strikes us as ‘threatening,’ ‘pensive,’ or ‘joyous’ in its sounding. These interpretations of music’s ‘character,’ as Frith paraphrases the words of Frank Sibley, are not adjectives feebly tagged on to ‘true’ musical understanding (shown as technical literacy), but rather, can be the mark of an appreciation and ‘understanding’ unshared by those who could offer a complete picture of its theoretical properties:

As Sibley suggests, someone could describe a piece of music perfectly accurately in technical terms while being quite unable to appreciate it; while someone quite unable to read music can perfectly well convince us that they’ve “understood” a work: they make sense of our own experience of it through their figurative description. This is the job of the rock critic, for example. (PR 263)

Although Frith’s use of the terms ‘appreciate’ and ‘understand’ is somewhat unclear, the thrust of his argument must not be misconstrued as a derision of the musically educated, and a valorization of the non-educated. To be clear, the point of suggesting the importance of an elemental attunement to music is not to extend a naïïve privileging of musical illiteracy, but to suggest, rather, that most everyone, by virtue of being socialized into a culture in which music plays an important and variegated role, is capable of ‘understanding’ music: we hum and hum along to our favourite songs, dance to that which moves us, feel the tension as the
allegro trill of strings accompanies some pivotal moment of a film, and refuse some particular music when it elicits something inappropriate for the situation at hand. This is Heidegger's primordiality as it announces itself within a musical context: this is musical hearkening, the 'hearing which understands.' Although Frith's argument is hampered by cliched concepts, his blunt declaration of our everyday musical 'knowledge' demonstrates this hearkening: "[W]e may not be able to tell the difference between a major and a minor chord, but we do know when a piece turns sad" (PR 109). To be clear, we may be more faithful to Frith's intention if we change the word 'tell' (which could be confused with 'sense') to the word 'name' (which captures unequivocally the essence of technical knowledge). We must also be careful to stress that it is not the piece itself that is sad, but rather the mood-response it may evoke for some particular listener. Indeed, as hearkening, this musical listening is also a resonance within a specific context.

As Heidegger will make explicit in his analysis of art as event, understanding musical performance requires an understanding, as comprehensive as possible, of the context of its presentation. But wrestling free from the pull of this enduring musical object, the 'work,' is a struggle that even those who claim to have grasped the contingencies of its production are often unable to win. Exploring these particular pitfalls encountered in the work of Chanan and Covach will prevent us from making the same mistakes as we move our analysis further into Heidegger's discussion of the art event.

Although the seeds of a more radical understanding of music are certainly present in their work, the periodically misdirected conclusions drawn by Chanan and Covach exemplify the illusory nature of such victories. Chanan, for example, is unquestionably tuned in to the sociality of music, and, on the whole, extends arguments calling for its legitimacy and proper
understanding, but is nonetheless periodically lured back into a framework in which the musical work still persists as the sole arbiter of meaning:

In neither case can meaning really be stabilized and foreclosed, because music, like the uttered word—as opposed the word in the dictionary—leads a socially charged life, which always tastes of the concrete circumstances. Every actor knows that the same words can be uttered in an infinite number of ways.... If this is the case with words, which have definite meanings, how much more so with music, where intonation is everything? (42)

Though on the surface a critique of the shortcomings of positivism, Chanan’s analysis is in fact only a veiled example of precisely this line of thinking: to argue that musical meanings change accordingly with measurably different intonations is but to shift the threshold of its application further along the spectrum, away from the abstract value of the sounds themselves and onto the infinite ways they are able to be sounded—in both cases, the totality of meanings, however boundless, is thought to be derived from some posited musical object. A truly radical stance against positivism challenges that meanings can change not only according to the infinitesimal differences in the sounds themselves, but also ineluctably along with the extra-musical contingencies of their presentation. A somewhat humourous anecdote from an uncommon opportunity to compare three consecutive concerts by the same musicians will demonstrate the importance of this point.

Three separate shows played by Shellac during the final weekend of January, 2001 at The Knitting Factory in Los Angeles, California provided a rare and remarkable space of comparison for considering the importance of the extra-musical contingencies of musical performance. The overall mood at each of these shows was, from the very start of these events, something quite distinct from the two others. While the first show on Saturday evening held a certain air of anticipation, and Sunday evening’s performance, by contrast, was embroiled in one of unmistakable belligerence, it was the events of Sunday morning
which exemplified the way that the social moods of a musical event are intimately bound up with its social possibilities.

This unscheduled Sunday morning show ‘began’ at ten o’clock in the morning. The occurrence that marked this beginning, however, was not the sounding of the band’s first note, but was the assembly of all the attendees into the lounge area of the venue to await the delivery of breakfast: 40-dozen Krispy Kreme brand donuts furnished at the band’s expense. The news—and the eventual delivery—of the donuts initially elicited amongst the concert-goers a sense of that same uneasy gratitude one feels towards the person who has just extended one a kind favour, but with whom one is not very well-acquainted—there was, at first, a general hesitancy, even a sense of disbelief and mistrust, that made people resist opening the boxes to take one of the donuts. They ate their first like it was stolen. When the humour of it all overtook these sheepish feelings, it turned out to be a wonderfully—and apparently necessary—disarming gesture. So did arranging for the comedian who, posing as an actual priest, did some off-colour jokes and call-and-response set-ups with the audience before the band came out on stage.

The band continued the comedy with the real-life tales of, first, the mix-up in ordering and picking up the donuts, and then in exchanging with the audience stories of former donut-and-coffee binges. This communication between band and audience in these moments was unusually friendly, quite unlike that of the previous night. In fact, most everything about the event was unusual: the time of day, the free donuts, the comedian, the lack of intoxicated audience members, the lack of an abundance of audience members, the lack of audience chatter when the band wasn’t playing, the lack of canned music to fill periods of ‘waiting,’ the lack of an opening band, and most generally, the fact that, at eleven
o' clock on a Sunday morning, we were all about to subject ourselves to the music of one of the most decisive and punishing syncopated rock bands out there—a giant, ironic smirk hung over the whole affair. The experiment, however, turned out to be an absolute success: the buoyant atmosphere sensed at the start of the show was carried throughout the entire performance. The difference between these events could never be accounted for in purely musical terms.

And yet, despite our reading of Heidegger which has led us to explore the extra-musical contingencies musical performance, Covach's (provisionally) Heideggerian pursuit of a 'worldly' understanding of music periodically veers back into the domain of the purely musical. He is certainly keen to understand the crux of Heidegger's argument and its potential application for a better understanding of music: Covach recognizes that a Cartesian metaphysics has, in its hegemonic primacy, obstructed a more elemental, primordial understanding through which we are first and most authentically involved with our world, and thus, from which any theoretical understanding of music has thus derived. However, although he thus claims to challenge this perspective and argue for a more situated, contextual understanding of musical experience, the components in his network still remain musical works, which, albeit now interlace more enigmatically as they form the structure of various "musical worlds," nonetheless, still sit in isolation from the contingencies of their presentation. The scope of his critique still encloses only a dualistic antinomy of work and event: "The musical world of a piece is a number of other works that form a kind of background—a body of other pieces that create a purely musical context for some particular piece" (Covach; my gloss).
In his article, “The Ideal Four Minutes and Thirty-Three Seconds: Response to Covach,” Richard Cochrane recognizes this shortcoming and, taking Covach’s notion of a ‘musical world,’ appropriately broadens its scope to reflect Heidegger’s own radically historical understanding of art not as static, enduring object, but as a specific, contextual event. In reformulating Covach’s notion of a musical world, Cochrane shows immediately his grasp of the issue by temporalizing such a world as a transient space:

It is absolutely essential that this space is not considered to be a static space.... [And] we can see that it must be a mobile space, if only because Dasein is necessarily temporal, and so therefore is all musical experience.... [A musical world] is certainly constituted from musical experiences (what else could constitute it?), yet it does not contain works of music. It is, rather, a space created by experiences of music, engagements with music as “equipment,” as environment. Thus, it is an aesthetic space.... Thus the musical world, although still subjective, is nevertheless social and political. (Cochrane)

Cochrane sees the radical understanding of music that a Heideggerian critique points towards, the description of the historicized event that Heidegger will later offer in “The Origin of the Work of Art”: the definitive elements of musical experience are musical moments, not musical works. Indeed, as “The Origin of the Work of Art” moves towards its finality, Heidegger gradually abandons references to ‘works’ as the locus of this truth, recognizing that “however zealously we inquire into the work’s self-sufficiency, we shall still fail to find its actuality as long as we do not also agree to take the work as something worked, effected. To take it thus lies closest to us, for in the word ‘work’ we hear what is worked” (183).

Indeed, as intimated throughout our discussion on the pervasiveness of the musical object, our analysis is being propelled towards understanding musical performance as a unique social space, bound to the context of its occurrence. Having prepared Heidegger’s hermeneutic understanding of everyday listening, communication, mood, and attunement,
returning to “The Origin of the Work of Art,” *Being and Time*, and *The Will to Power as Art*, will extend these themes into a portrait of various audience relations in the musical event.

**From Sound to Ereignis: Gathering and Sheltering**

In “The Origin of the Work of Art,” Heidegger contends that, in its greatest incarnation, encountering art (and thereby musical performance) is not so much a private experience with some art-object as it is a cultural-historical event (*Ereignis*), a happening of truth as the ‘founding leap’ (*Ur-sprung*) which articulates a community. *Ereignis* is a common word in German, where it means ‘event,’ ‘occurrence,’ or ‘incident’ but becomes, for the middle Heidegger, the term for the ‘worldly’ voicing of truth as gathering, a disclosure that unfolds—and unfolds only—along with preserving as *Gelassenheit*. As event, and not object-thing, art has no localizable origin in the genius of some creator, and no pure expression as the work thus produced; rather, it occurs as entities normally secluded in everydayness are brought together in an open allowance:

The preservers of a work belong to its createdness with an essentiality equal to that of the creators. But it is the work that makes the creators possible in their essence, the work that by its own essence is in need of preservers. If art is the origin of the work, this means that art lets those who essentially belong together at work, the creator and the preserver, originate, each in his own essence. (OWA 196)

Placed in the context of musical performance, Heidegger’s description of the event as a ‘belonging together’ of creators and preservers, and as grounding “being for and with one another” suggests a certain degree of sociality, of a communication that transpires—and here the notion of discourse as shared attunement first established in *Being and Time* makes itself heard—prior to, or somehow outside of, language (OWA 193). It is precisely in terms of this situated attunement that Schürmann explains the relationality of *Ereignis*:

In Heidegger’s thinking there exists, for lack of a better term, a pervasive mutuality in which all aspects pertaining to artistic creation—artist, art work, audience, and art itself—occur in concert, each tuned to the other, so that the happening of art, the happening of truth through art, comes from the fourfold totality or it does not come at all. (45)
And, again echoing Heidegger's description of discourse as shared attunement, Chanan too describes the musical event precisely in terms of an ailinguistic 'social dialogue':

Music is performance art. What does this mean apart from gate-money, deficits, impresarios, agents, copyrights, trades unions, the financial (and emotional) insecurity of rank-and-file musicians? It means the break, the rupture, the abyss between the world of these social agents and the space of music itself, where the form of interaction is embodied differently: through a language of sonic gesture that begins and ends beyond words. Music is a form of social communication; musical performance is a site of social intercourse, and a form of social dialogue. (23)

Although Chanan's comments suggest a congruency with Heidegger's model of everyday communication in *Being and Time*, he is also clear that the performative event, as such, is the space in which everydayness is seized upon differently, in which a different form of dialogue takes place. And while the sociality Chanan describes seems to propel the discussion towards a richer understanding of performance as a space of social discourse, his insinuation of the cleanliness of this rupture points towards some unsettling extensions. Indeed, in Chanan's description of what constitutes the rift between these two worlds, that the social mechanisms which set up the event are severed from the event itself in its unfolding, there exists the same conflicted duality of Nietzsche's model. Such accounts fail to recognize that the manner in which the event is framed from the outset plays a significant role in determining the possibilities of the social relations that may occur within it. From the variant descriptions of performance relations of Woodstock '99 to GG Allin to The Need, it is apparent that the trajectory of these events maintains a certain grounding in the social apparatus they arise from. While Heidegger's account of the art event also stresses a transformation of, even a transportation out of the everyday, in "Logos," Heidegger also explains that every gathering always takes place under the guidance of the 'fore-gathering' *[Vor-lese]*:

[G]athering is more than mere amassing. To gathering belongs a collecting which brings under shelter....
It is proper to every gathering that the gatherers assemble to coordinate their work to the sheltering, and—gathered together with that end in view—first begin to gather. The gathering [die Lese] requires and demands this assembly. This original coordination governs their collective gathering. (61-2)

Heidegger's declaration in the first line of this passage announces the issue: ‘gathering is more than mere amassing.’ Under Chanan’s view, the specific social discourse of each particular performance would have to generate itself out of such a physical amassing of listeners.

Chanan's comments, however, broach once again the key issue of audience presence, specifically, the question of the collective relations that Nietzsche addressed only provisionally in terms of the Dionysian throng. To return to the soundcheck/performance case at the opening of the discussion, hinging the contrast on the physical presence of others certainly makes intuitive sense: the difference between these two musical ‘presentations,’ obviously, lies in the number of people there to observe them. Indeed, the physical presence of these other listeners seems, at first, to be the variable on which this contingency rests, but reducing other audience members to a set of bodies, a regiment of space-fillers, offers a crude and crippled understanding of what is a more equivocal co-preservation of the event. True, a complex interplay of our senses—visual, acoustic, olfactory, and to varying or even non-existent degrees, tactile and savory—work in largely unconscious operation to ascertain the presence of other listeners during a performance. However, prior to the increase in visual stimuli, the rise in crowd noise, the change in humidity, temperature, smell, and the expanded opportunity of touch ushered in by bolstering the size of the audience, encapsulating all of these are the demarcation of the performance as a performance and the concomitant phenomenological ground of being-with other listeners at that performance. By establishing the phenomenological priority of being-with others at a musical performance, we can
illuminate, in a more precise way, the scope of this contingency to include the myriad possibilities of audience relations which surface from this elemental ground.

In his discussion of Dasein and its spatiality in *Being and Time*, Heidegger works to show that, in their everydayness, other Dasein are not primarily interpreted in their brute physical occurrence, but rather in terms of their contextual, existential being-in-the-world. Heidegger seems entirely justified in often reiterating his own *caveat* against such interpretations:

> Theoretically concocted 'explanations' of the Being-present-at-hand of Others urge themselves upon us all too easily; but over against such explanations we must hold fast to the phenomenal facts of the case... namely, that others are encountered *environmentally*. (BT 155)

And yet, unlike objects that—according to Dasein’s particular mode of concern—oscillate between showing up as present-at-hand or ready-to-hand entities, Heidegger contends that being-with other Dasein cannot be properly understood within either of these two ordinary categories. Indeed, encountering other Dasein—though as radically contextual as Dasein’s involvement with other entities—nonetheless remains distinct from other types of involvement in its being manifest from out of a selfsame existential location:

> Thus Dasein’s world frees entities which not only are quite different from equipment and Things, but which also—in accordance with their kind of Being as Dasein themselves—are ‘in’ the world in which they are at the same time encountered within-the-world, and are ‘in’ it by way of Being-in-the-world. These entities are neither present-at-hand nor ready-to-hand; on the contrary, they are like the very Dasein which frees them, in that they are there too, and there with it. (BT 154)

As Heidegger contends in his illustration of such existential priority, in meeting a co-worker “we meet them ‘at work,’ that is, primarily in their Being-in-the-world,” and likewise if we see someone “just standing around,” we interpret this not entirely indifferently, but in terms of “an existential mode of Being”—in short, “the other is encountered in his Dasein-with in the world” (BT 156). Thus, in Heideggerian terms, those other members in the audience are
encountered as other Dasein in *that* context, as there along with us, also participating in the preservation of *that* particular performance in its being set out in such and such a fashion (BT 156). Indeed, it is out of this shared existential ground, and not first and foremost from a common physical location, that various sorts of audience relations are able to emerge.

**Moments of Resonance: The Audience In and Out of Attunement**

Just as discourse transpires as the social being-with that understands a shared situation as mood, so too it is mood that is the attuning force of the audience at a musical performance. Indeed, attending a live musical performance is not only a listening-*to*, that is, a privative exchange between one's own mood and musical sound, but it is also a listening-*with* other participants, and in this manner becomes a nebulous and contingent space of communication with the moods of other listeners as much as an absorption in one's own. Comprised of a number of individual listeners who are—at any given moment during that performance—each a site of their own musical and personal contingencies of the past and present, such relations will play themselves out amidst the moods of these individual audience members: boredom, consternation, contentment, or elation, a circulating energy of vastly different (even competing) moods both constitutes and transforms the possibilities of any particular musical event. As Heidegger declares, “we are never free of moods” and “when we master a mood, we do so by way of a counter-mood” (BT 175). As such, over the course of the performance, it is possible that each individual in the audience will undergo various unique mood changes of varying intensities. However, despite what may seem, at times, a precariously solipsistic account of individual mental states which we alone may determine and control, some of Heidegger’s comments suggest that it is not so much that *we* have moods, but more accurately, that *moods have us*: “A mood assails us. It comes neither
from ‘outside’ nor from ‘inside,’ but arises out of Being-in-the-world, as a way of such Being” (BT 176). In The Will to Power as Art, Heidegger broadens and clarifies his earlier, provisional sketch of this equivocality to include a more distinctly public and even more corporeal mediation of our moods, suggesting that our environmental context always exerts a kind of magnetic pull on our moods, urging them towards a resonance with this public situation:

We do not “have” a body; rather, we “are” bodily... But because feeling, as feeling oneself to be, always just as essentially has a feeling for beings as a whole, every bodily state involves some way in which the things around us and the people with us lay a claim on us or do not do so.... Mood is never merely a way of being determined in our inner being for ourselves. It is above all a way of being attuned, and letting ourselves be attuned, in this or that way in mood. Mood is precisely the basic way in which we are outside ourselves. But that is the way we are essentially and constantly. (99)

This being-with other listeners grounded in its existential priority, our corporeal involvement in the audience now emerges not as the sole fulcrum of audience presence, but as the inextricable interface of this attunement—immersed within a crowd of other listeners, we are, in this dyad of body and mood, situated within a hermeneutic circle of affecting and being-affected by these other listeners, and as such, co-create the unfolding of the musical event itself. Most often during a musical performance—even as we are inevitably affected by the presence of other listeners—the trajectories of individual moods may not intersect in any significant manner, or may, in this intersection, express only a uniform boredom with the banality of the affair, but sometimes, albeit for brief, fleeting moments, the sense of a more powerful resonance amongst the crowd makes for a kind of audience cohesion. A mood of elation arising in the assembled crowd, we help carry, and are carried by, the momentum of this collective energy. Eliciting this sense of group unity, Dreyfus quotes Heidegger’s comments on the thoroughly captivating power of social moods:

A—as we say—well-disposed person brings a good mood to a group. In this case does he produce in himself a psychic experience, in order then to transfer it to the others, like the way
infectious germs wander from one organism to others?... Or another person is in a group that in its manner of being dampens and depresses everything; no one is outgoing. What do we learn from this? Moods are not accompanying phenomena; rather, they are the sort of thing that determines being-with-one-another in advance. It seems as if, so to speak, a mood is in each case already there, like an atmosphere, in which we are steeped and by which we are thoroughly determined. (BiW 171)

Diffuse, enveloping, totalizing: our own mood is seized upon and transformed through this participation in a group mood. However, Heidegger’s comments here evoke not only the manner in which one partakes in an eruption of a collective ecstasy, but also points, more foundationally, to our earlier supposition as to the contingency of the event’s enjoinment as that specific event. In being demarcated as a particular type of concert catering to a particular segment of the population, there is, set out ‘in advance,’ a certain mood to the performance which, as Heidegger states in the passage above, would determine and delimit the scope of these relational possibilities, the sheltering of the ‘fore-gathering.’ As Heidegger contends of interpretation, “Whenever something is interpreted as something, the interpretation will be founded essentially upon fore-having, fore-sight, and fore-conception. An interpretation is never a presuppositionless apprehending of something presented to us” (BT 192). A self-containing volatility, mood is at once the anarchic and unpredictable force of liberation, and the constraining and coercive boundary of such possibilities. In its greatest intensity, the collective mood of elation during a musical performance is thus likewise both the expression, and the founding articulation of, what is in many ways a pre-existing community—indeed, it is the site and manner of its gathering. After all, what is community if not a concept of affect? Belonging-to is not a matter of shared physicality, but rather a shared social mood. Although still offering only a provisional mention of community in Being and Time, Heidegger states clearly, at many different points, that authentic being-with cannot be predicated on physical proximity alone:
As Schürmann notes, however, Heidegger’s sense of community and the events in which they become articulated becomes stronger after the Kehre:

In the writings after Being and Time, the concept of being-there (Dasein) signifies less and less the individual and increasingly collectivities and peoples—for example, “the historical being of the Greeks.” The term designates the situatedness of a Menschentum or a community. (155)

Indeed, although this foundation of bodily attunement in mood is wholly absent from the discussion and he again resists using the term ‘community’ as such, in “The Origin of the Work of Art” Heidegger recognizes that art is the gathering force which erects a space for such an attunement. In “Heidegger and Foucault on the Subject, Agency and Practices,” Dreyfus draws out a local sense of communion Heidegger wants to set within a more grandiose trajectory of a people’s destiny and ‘historical existence’ (OWA 202):

For everyday practices to give meaning to people’s lives and unite them in a community something must collect the scattered practices of the group, unify them into coherent possibilities for action, and hold them up to the people. The people can then act and relate themselves to each other in terms of this exemplar. And the object that performs this function best Heidegger calls a work of art. (HFSAP)

Or, in Heidegger’s own words:

The origin of the work of art—that is, the origin of both the creators and the preservers, which is to say of a people’s historical existence—is art. This is so because art is in its essence an origin: a distinctive way in which truth comes into being, that is, becomes historical. (OWA 202)

Stochastic and momentary, the voicing of this collective Dasein articulates “a being such as never was before and will never come to be again” (OWA 187). As Schürmann reminds us, to “retrieve it historically is to recover the event of presencing only mediately…. That is why we will never know what the Incan monuments and jewels truly meant for their users” (158).

However, despite the thoroughgoing historicality of the event, it also initiates a gathering, a
space of shared attunement that—even in all its radical micro-contingencies—nonetheless evanesces along an arc that manages to contain it as an event.

**Heidegger on Nietzsche: Dionysus as Horizon**

Having outlined both the portrait of Nietzsche's Dionysian in *The Birth of Tragedy*, and a Heideggerian interpretation of audience relations based on his account of mood, listening, and being-with, we are now prepared to understand the full scope of their confrontation over the nature of the Dionysian. As Young simultaneously declares their relation and their rift, "Translated into Heidegger's language, what Nietzsche understood was that music possesses, in fact to a consummate degree, the power to be an Ereignis-experience"—the sub-text is, of course, that Heidegger resisted what Nietzsche embraced so emphatically (170). Indeed, in *The Will to Power as Art* Heidegger's criticisms of Nietzsche's enthusiasm mainly confirm the suspicion that Heidegger is a linguistic, at most, a poetic thinker, not a musical one. But investigating Heidegger's aurality has, rather paradoxically, illuminated the depth and essence of Nietzsche's endorsement of music in its essential difference from the plastic arts: the musical event, like the ephemeral sounds around which it revolves, gathers listeners belongingly into a space of shared attunement. So intimately composed of and sustained by evanescent sound, musical performance thus unfolds in time much differently than does a painting, a sculpture, or, Heidegger's most conspicuous example, a Greek temple. In *Musical Elaborations*, Edward Said reminds us that "one can reread a book, or revisit an exhibition: it makes no sense to 'revisit' a concert.... [C]oncert occasions are always located in a uniquely endowed site" (xix). However, as Said would no doubt be the first to agree, reading a book and visiting an exhibition are just as much unique, transitory 'performances' as attending a concert: each of these encounters
unfolds in some specific situation, and thus, can never be 'revisited' in the same way again. But his intention here is quite likely to illustrate the fact that the musical event is composed of a temporality and evanescence that is yet more essential than the art encounter which centers on a tangible, physically enduring ‘object.’ None of this is to suggest that other art forms—and, in fact, even other kinds of events—do not also become the founding articulation of communities, only that music, being of sound, which is evanescent, which does gather belongingly, which is immersive in its most exceptional moments, catalyzes an event that can become the extension of all these attributes: unique, socially communicative, moving. In fact, far from arguing that the musical event alone enjoys this function, Young factitiously challenges the plurality of ‘art’ that Heidegger’s understanding of Ereignis entails: “Is a concept of art according to which a Greek temple, a medieval altarpiece, a Palestrina Mass, a football match, a rock concert, and perhaps something not too unlike a Nuremburg rally, might all count as ‘artworks,’ an artificial cobbling together of disparate things?” (18). Frith too points to the similarity between the space of music and other communal events before declaring that, coupled with its direct emotional intensity, it is music’s abstract malleability that sets it apart from other events of its kind:

The experience of pop music is an experience of placing: in responding to a song, we are drawn, haphazardly, into affective and emotional alliances with the performers and with the performers’ other fans. Again, this also happens in other areas of popular culture. Sport, for example, is clearly a setting in which people directly experience community, feel an immediate bond with other people, articulate a particular kind of collective pride.... But music is especially important to this process of placement because of something specific to musical experience, namely, its direct emotional intensity. Because of its qualities of abstractness (which ‘serious’ aestheticians have always stressed) music is an individualizing form. We absorb songs into our own lives and rhythms into our own bodies; they have a looseness of reference that makes them immediately accessible. (MS 139)

Again, Frith’s last lines about the accessibility of music echo Nietzsche’s point in The Birth of Tragedy, but Heidegger sees the space of art and community as more diffuse (as Young satirizes somewhat in the passage above). And yet, as broad as it may be, the unfolding of
this space also manages to sit in distinction to the everyday. Indeed, despite Heidegger’s relentless dismantling of Cartesian epistemology, one duality Heidegger seems willing to maintain is that between the world of the everyday, and the world opened up, in event, by the work of art: even as his hermeneutics of mood and listening show how the everyday still grounds the unfolding of the musical event, there is preserved a recognition of a certain and extraordinary shift that sets it apart from the comparative banality of Dasein’s everyday coping. Though admittedly more strongly demarcated in Nietzsche’s Apollinian/Dionysian dichotomy, it is in asserting this difference between the everyday and the art event that Nietzsche and Heidegger come into a partial congruency—they share a similar understanding of our typical, everyday relations with others and the role that art plays in transforming, even if only temporarily, the nature of those relationships. In his characteristically dramatic fashion, Nietzsche points to the manner in which the encapsulating presence of music catalyzes a feeling of community amongst individuals whose relations in the social world are more typically marked by that of alienation:

Now the slave is a free man; now all the rigid, hostile barriers that necessity, caprice, or ‘impudent convention’ have fixed between man and man are broken. Now with the gospel of universal harmony, each one feels himself not only united, reconciled, and fused with his neighbor, but as one with him, as if the veil of maya had been torn aside and were now merely fluttering in tatters before the mysterious primordial unity. (BoT 37)

For Nietzsche, the collective participation in the energy of the performance forces a temporary rupture of structural power in which human relations take place on what could be described as a supra-political plane—perhaps in being collectively silenced, even somewhat physiologically manipulated by the totality of the event, everyday power-relations lack means of exercise and are thus rendered ineffectual. The metaphor of the freed slave elicits this leveling power of the event. Likewise, for Heidegger, Dasein, in its everydayness, remains ensnared within what is only a facade of togetherness, carried along in the
anonymous idle chatter of *das Man* in which “under the mask of ‘for-one-another,’” an
‘against-one-another’ is in play” (BT 219; *my gloss*). Heidegger reminds us that when Dasein
“gets lost in such ways as aloofness, hiding oneself away, or putting on a disguise, Being-
with-one-another must follow special routes of its own in order to come close to Others, or
even to ‘see through them’ [“hinter sie” zu kommen]” (BT 161). While Heidegger is not
particularly forthcoming in *Being and Time* about describing these ‘special routes,’ his
comments later in “The Origin of the Work of Art” outline—unequivocally so—a space of
authentic togetherness.

Foreshadowed in these comments from his earlier work, it is in *The Will to Power as
Art* that Heidegger clearly shows his rather anxious relation to Nietzsche’s characteristically
sporadic (though no less potent) physiological conceptions of aesthetic feeling, especially
when it comes to the fervency of a musical rapture. To be clear, Heidegger is willing to
endorse affect as vital for the power of art, but not on Nietzsche’s terms of Dionysian frenzy,
a rapture which, despite Nietzsche’s fanatic praise of *Rausch* as an ecstatic, communal
unification, still remains, for Heidegger, ensconced within a fundamentally Cartesian
metaphysics—art as aesthetics becomes another occasion of technology, the slave of a
necessarily dualistic, ‘lived experience.’ Specifically criticizing Wagnerian opera in its overt
gesture towards what is, for Heidegger, a shallow collectivism, Heidegger condemns this will
to dominate as the quintessential expression of such a metaphysics:

But beyond such sheer quantitative unification, the artwork should be a celebration of the
national community, it should be the religion... Music in the form of opera becomes the
authentic art.... What is wanted is the domination of art as music, and thereby the domination
of the pure state of feeling—the tumult and delirium of the senses, tremendous contraction,
the felicitous distress that swoons in enjoyment, absorption in “the bottomless sea of
harmonies,” the plunge into frenzy and the disintegration into sheer feeling as redemptive.
The “live experience” as such becomes decisive. The work is merely what arouses such
experience.... That the music could assume such preeminence at all has its grounds in the
increasingly aesthetic posture taken toward art as a whole—it is the conception and estimation
of art in terms of the unalloyed state of feeling and the growing barbarization of the very state
to the point where it becomes the sheer bubbling and boiling of feeling abandoned to itself. (WPA 86-8)

Similar examples of disdain abound in the text. Heidegger expresses repeatedly his contempt for the dynamic, untamed, even volatile essence of Dionysian frenzy by employing a language of strain, fervor, and mutability—though with different intentions, Heidegger manages to capture quite well the unrelenting tenacity, the almost feral quality in Nietzsche’s earliest formulations of rapture from *The Birth of Tragedy*. True, Heidegger does seem to capitulate briefly, even declaring the possibility of *Rausch* to be a temporary, almost therapeutic sanctuary that actually stands in *opposition* to technicity: “And yet such arousal of frenzied feeling and unchaining of ‘affects’ could be taken as a rescue of ‘life,’ especially in view of the growing impoverishment and deterioration of existence occasioned by industry, technology and finance…” (WPA 88). However, his comments immediately following this rather unexpected fissure show that this is only his ruse to denigrate as merely pedestrian such a rapture of escape. In keeping with his affinity for things linguistic, Heidegger again gives the final and decisive word to the meditative with an alternative language of calm and tangibility: “Rising on swells of feeling would have to substitute for a solidly grounded and articulated position in the midst of beings, the kind of thing that only great poetry and thought can create” (WPA 88).

Clearly, Heidegger is trying to formulate an understanding of feeling, of affect which does not suffer from the various pitfalls of a Cartesian metaphysics—as always, he seeks to further destabilize the common dichotomies of mind/body and nature/culture generally associated with the Cartesian ‘world-picture.’ However, in attempting to overcome the hegemony of this understanding and yet retain a sense of art’s profound importance, Heidegger tries to leave behind the usual sites of art’s power of affect—emotion, feeling,
physiological change—and, citing Nietzsche’s own reflections on the rift, shifts the focus onto the dissonant friction between art and truth. Heretofore, Heidegger has not only been unrestrained in imbuing his analysis of Nietzsche with his own philosophical language and formulations but has seemingly attempted to execute, with an almost ferocious tenacity, a project of assimilation. Aware that he is ‘massaging’ Nietzsche’s text, Heidegger attempts a brief justification in the midst of a discussion of ‘the grand style’: “For every great thinker always thinks one jump more originally than he directly speaks. Our interpretation must therefore try to say what is unsaid by him” (WPA 134). And yet, strangely, here Heidegger resists re-visiting the relationship between art and truth discussed in “The Origin of the Work of Art,” that is, of art as a setting-into work of truth, as an event. Instead, he rests with his brief, earlier comments about the primacy, captivation, and historical grounding of art for Dasein: “Art is not just one among a number of items, activities one engages in and enjoys now and then; art places the whole of Dasein in decision and keeps it there” (WPA 125). Following Nietzsche, but here managing to mute his characteristic exuberance, Heidegger also contends that a certain dilation of the communicative faculties takes place in the aesthetic state:

We do not dwell alongside the event as spectators; we ourselves remain within the [aesthetic] state. Our Dasein receives from it a luminous relation to beings, the sight in which beings are visible to us. The aesthetic state is the envisionment through which we constantly see, so that everything here is discernible to us. Art is the most visionary configuration of will to power. (WPA 139)

In a footnote to this passage, Krell makes clear that the translation of durchsichtig as ‘visionary’ could be “otherwise rendered as ‘lucid’ or ‘perspicuous’” and, as such, contains not a connotation of ‘the visual’ in art, of ‘visual art,’ but of the “envisionment, das Sichtige, that art opens up for beings” (WPA 139). In these passages, Heidegger’s tentative relation to Nietzsche’s notion of Rausch again becomes apparent—where Nietzsche is quite prepared to

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endorse an *ecstasy* of possession, understood as a *vertical* rise and fall, Heidegger works to manipulate art’s powerful ‘hold’ over the spectator, its captivation, into a *horizontal* lucidity, an attunement bordering on the meditative. In doing so, Heidegger neutralizes all the most satisfying anarchic, explosive heights of Nietzsche’s musical *ecstasy*. However, it is in this tempering of Nietzsche’s swing between nature and culture that Heidegger’s analysis also revises the ahistorical, largely acultural shortcomings in Nietzsche’s theory and suggests a more thorough, and itself satisfying, picture of how something like a Dionysian frenzy might transpire.

In its own quiescent way, applying Heidegger’s notions of everyday listening, being-with, and mood to an understanding of musical performance yields a more differentiated picture of its possibilities, that is, it manages to capture the true volatility of the event which, for the most part and in most cases, may never erupt into united frenzy, but will rather unfold as a space of vacillating moods perhaps brought to moments of resonance—in acoustic terms, this space would be a series of oscillating hums and drones rather than a maelstrom of explosions and crescendos. Heidegger again manages to compress and thus broaden Nietzsche’s anarchism such that it permeates even the banal, but despite this vaporization of Nietzsche’s intensity, there remains in the brief moments of community cohesion a strong sense of the same freedom Nietzsche extols in the Dionysian, of the temporary and blissful escape enjoyed in overcoming the social obstacles of the everyday. True, Heidegger’s is a decidedly less active brand of physical abandon—his is an understanding that sits precariously on the edge of a paralysis—but there emerges in both thinkers the same extraordinary perspicuity sparked in the musical event, the same feverish openness of
communication in which life is enhanced and communities find a means of their expression.

As Nietzsche writes:

The aesthetic state possesses a superabundance of means of communication, together with an extreme receptivity for stimuli and signs. It constitutes the high point of communication and transmission between living creatures—it is the source of languages. This is where languages originate: the languages of tone as well as the languages of gestures and glances. The more complete phenomenon is always the beginning: our faculties are sublimated out of more complete faculties. But even today one still hears with one's muscles, one even reads with one's muscles.... Every enhancement of life enhances man's power of communication, as well as his power of understanding. Empathy with the souls of others is originally nothing moral, but a physiological susceptibility to suggestion.... (WP 427-8)

And, to compare this passage from Heidegger's reading of Nietzsche:

[Enhancement of force must be understood as the capacity to extend beyond oneself, as a relation to beings in which beings themselves are experienced as being more fully in being, richer, more perspicuous, more essential.... Enhancement is to be understood in terms of mood: to be caught up in elation—and to be borne along by our buoyancy as such.... It means above all an attunement which is so disposed that nothing is foreign to it, nothing too much for it, which is open to everything and ready to tackle anything—the greatest enthusiasm and the supreme risk hard by one another.

With that we come up against a third aspect of the feeling of rapture: the reciprocal penetration of all enhancements of every ability to do and see, apprehend and address, communicate and achieve release. (WPA 100)

Considered relationally, the works of Nietzsche and Heidegger share in placing—in a more precise and comprehensive manner than when approached in distinction—musical listeners within a live event, and thereby challenge the hegemonic understanding of the isolated artwork as the locus of meaning: being-there with other listeners becomes an integral part of musical meaning. What this model points towards is thus a new aesthetics of musical performance not based on the enduring meaning of a static work, but rather one attempting to account for the myriad contingencies associated with its presentation.

Genre and Community

The distinction between 'work' and 'event' has precluded the importance of these contingencies as contributors to the musical meanings of live performance: it has generally been assumed that 'meaning' resides in the 'work.' However, if this is indeed an oversimplification of the case, and it is more accurately one of the factors in the meaning of a
performance, then the corollary notion of kinship by aesthetic genre is likewise an oversimplified approach to the organization of music—it is without question a convenient way of categorizing music, but in terms of live performance and its gathering force for a particular community, it can all too easily offer a distorted picture of these events. Speaking of precisely this risk as it applies to the contemporary state of popular music, Albini makes an implicit case for a more differentiated understanding of music which includes its context within a network of specific social relations:

There has always been a legitimate underground. The difference now is that some of the mainstream music is stylistically similar to some common antecedents in underground music. You can listen to records on major labels that get played on the radio and think, “Wow, some of this sounds like The Stooges or The Ramones or whatever.” That does not mean that in any way those people are operating in the legitimate underground or are common in any way with those people in the mainstream. (Shellac)

Musicians, in their activity of rehearsing, recording, touring, and performing, operate within certain music communities who themselves operate within certain venues, spaces, and networks of personal contacts, and who themselves have certain ways of relating with one another: each musical community, like any community, has its own particular set of codes, values, and rules. However, as Albini rightly notes, to those outside of these specific networks, kinship may appear closer than it is, because stylistically, even in terms of a fairly nuanced sub-genre, an entirely quantifiable distinction may be exceedingly difficult, if not impossible, to articulate. For example, local Vancouver band Mercury the Winged Messenger is stylistically close to the epic metal of Iron Maiden, but the people who cram the front row of Mercury shows are not likely the same people who frequent the city’s metal bars: the members of this band are networked within the diverse indie-rock scene of Vancouver and the identity of their enthusiasts follows accordingly. And to return to Andersen’s detailed account of The Need show in Seattle, even though this band could be
categorized as a somewhat experimental brand of epic prog-metal and might thus share common elements with Hawkwind and/or King Crimson, in all facets of their operations, these bands exist in and cater to entirely different networks and communities: understanding The Need’s music, their performances, their reason for being the musicians they are, as anything other than firmly ensconced within a community of lesbian punk youth and a radical gender politics would be to grossly misconstrue their presence as a band. Styles and influences collide and transfigure—the two members of the band have matching Judas Priest tattoos and sport the fashion signifiers of the metal genre—but their respective communities barely feel the breeze of the other in the crossing of network routes. We can only imagine how things at their Seattle performance could have been different were there a different blend of people there to preserve it. To grasp the host of contingencies—personal, historical, and cultural—that contributed to the community-enhancing success of The Need show Andersen describes near the beginning of the discussion is to grasp the full import of Heidegger’s puzzling hermeneutic circuitry which states that art is itself the founding leap:

The origin of the work of art—that is, the origin of both the creators and the preservers, which is to say of a people’s historical existence—is art. This so because art is in its essence an origin: a distinctive way in which truth comes into being, that is becomes historical. (OWA 202)

Indeed, as we have demonstrated, musical performance, like other live events, partakes of this historicity in a consummate fashion, but the question of technology, what in the case of music is the question of infinitely repeatable sound, must be addressed if we are to fully understand the social relations of performance. Following Attali, we will explore the scope of these changes initiated by the various technologies of repetition.

Musical Performance in the Age of Technicity

The communal functions of music did not disappear with the demise of tribal society; on the contrary, until now every type of human society has succoured them. But as the millennium draws to a close, the conditions of musical life are radically different. Music is with us all the
time, but is made by relatively few, and most of it is not heard as live performance at all. (Chanan 24)

We no longer live in a world of purely ephemeral sound. Phonographic (and now electroacoustic) technology has transformed what was a single listening into a potentially repeatable event. Seemingly simple, but the sound of everyday life changes accordingly, and with it so does the sound, time, and space of music: in its greatest scope, this is primarily a technology of spatio-temporal displacement. Music, once partaking in this ephemerality of sound, no longer exists solely as live performance, but becomes a near-omnipresent force in the listener’s soundscape. The variegated prevalence of technology initiates a continuing process of change in our ontology of music, such that, despite their appearance as discrete realms, live performance, in its ephemerality, and electroacoustic technology, in its capability of repetition, more accurately reveal themselves to be part of a complex, tensile interpenetration. Looking at Attali’s *Noise: The Political Economy of Music* in concert with the writings of Derrida, Heidegger, and Truax to examine the impact of this shift reveals not only how musicians and listeners explicitly interact with this technology of repetition, but how it is, even in its absence, also brought to ‘presence’ in performance, in the home, and in the recording studio, perpetually transforming musical experience in a host of oscillating tensions of artifact/evanescence, visuality/aurality, sociality/solitude, agency/subjection, and resistance/domination.

**Technologies of Disruption**

It was on December 6, 1877 that Thomas Edison used his phonograph—a needle and a rotating cylinder covered in tin foil—to make the first successful recording and replication of human speech (Thompson 133). Although this technology of repetition has since become so prevalent within the soundscape of our everyday lives that we have now integrated as
commonplace its metaphysical power of displacement, its emergence ushered in what was, and remains, in acoustic terms, no less than a fundamental disruption of time and space. It is an obvious but perhaps still somewhat neglected truism to suggest that, prior to the advent of even the crudest sound recording and replication technology, sound, any sound, had never been exactly replicated, was not replicable, had never been dislocated or disembodied from its original source—sound and source were always temporally and (to the extent that sound would have at least originated at the source) spatially synchronous. In his article, “Audio Art in the Deaf Century,” Douglas Kahn relays an equivocal blend of violence, desecration, and power in this simple act of sound reproduction:

Phonography wrenched the voice from its production in the throat, in a dual act of violation and theft, but then lodged it, like an echo without a landscape, in a mechanical memory. Sound was stolen only to be returned to its owner over and over again. Thus the surprise of Edison upon hearing the first recording: ‘I was never so taken aback in my life.’ (302)

This power is indeed one of extirpation: it is a technology to first mark and then to remove sound for transplant elsewhere, and, in this act of displacement, throws into crisis the entire spatio-temporal scope and purpose of musical performance. What was an inextricable link between sound and source meant that, understanding the term in the broadest sense, music was its performance: it was, as we say now, ‘live.’ From the perspective of the listener, to hear music, whether casual practice, or explicit performance, was to hear the sounds of musicians playing at that moment and in that space—even music pouring from an open window, or from the doorway of a club spoke of the living, of life. Heretofore, an ontology of music is one of context, not ubiquity; it is one of process, not possession; it is one of occasion, not banality, but the new technology of repetition delivers a new ontology of music, and thus, of live musical performance itself.
The definitive change seems rather simple: sound has become a mark, an inscription, and not merely in physical resemblance as the grooves of a record, but more significantly in its new status of permanent reserve, a dutiful attendance able to be ordered into action at a whim. Such command is precisely what indicates the present constellation of Being Heidegger describes in “The Question Concerning Technology”: “Everywhere everything is ordered to stand by, to be immediately on hand, indeed to stand there just so that it may be on call for a further ordering. Whatever is ordered about in this way has its own standing. We call it a standing-reserve [Bestand]” (322). However, as Derrida’s analysis of oral and literary marks in “Signature, Event, Context” elucidates, the shift this technology seems to initiate is never total, but instead operates in a perpetual interplay of presence and absence:

This structural possibility of being severed from its referent or signified (and therefore from communication and its context) seems to me to make of every mark, even if oral, a grapheme in general, that is, as we have seen, the nonpresent remaining of a differential mark cut off from its alleged “production” or origin. And I will extend this law even to all “experience” in general, if it is granted that there is no experience of pure presence, but only chains of differential marks. (318)

To put this into a discussion of musical technology and its impact on performance, these new marks, these noises, leave mnemonic traces in our understanding of music. Thus, this technology’s mediating role is not simply limited to its operation in the enhancement of a given performance, or the manner in which it affects and determines how a given piece of music is recorded, but extends beyond these such that its pervasiveness has so significantly altered the ontological understanding of music and its performance, that it is, even in its absence, equivocally present. This technology creates a situation where its traces manifest themselves, bring the technology to bear upon even the moments of its conspicuous invisibility.

**Soundtracks: The Ubiquity of Amplified Sound**
Although Edison’s invention initiated this fundamental shift in our acoustic ontology, the introduction of electrical recording and amplification which sought to improve upon the quality of sound reproduction and replication is really what now reigns as the technology of our musical lives. Truax describes this electroacoustic technology as that which is concerned with the energy transfer from acoustic to electrical forms, a process called transduction, as well as the subsequent processing and/or storage of the resultant audio signal.... It is generally assumed that the electroacoustic process ends with the conversion of the signal back into acoustic, audible form via a loudspeaker. (7)

In its myriad applications, this technology provides the possibility for a kind of musical omnipresence in which a host of everyday activities and experiences are now accompanied by what could be considered a musical soundtrack. In the home, not only do stereos and personal computers overtly deliver music from either radio stations or from a variety of recorded media, but the other major technological voice of the household, the television, dispenses musical sound somewhat more insidiously: at any random moment throughout the broadcasting day here in Vancouver, flipping through 50 channels (with a viewing of approximately two seconds each) suggests that sometimes as many as ten, but often only as few as five channels, will not feature some form of music being employed to construct either the background mood of a program/commercial, or existing as the explicit spectacle itself. This quasi-omnipresence continues outside the home with the same equivocal blend of active and passive forms of listening attention: automobiles provide music to those on the inside and the outside of the vehicle; the shopping mall has background level music piped throughout the interior and immediate exterior of the complex, with some businesses dispensing a louder, more foreground level of music presumably holding a greater appeal for their specific clientele; and restaurants, bars and clubs almost always feature some kind of music which, according to the atmosphere and nature of the establishment, will be played at
accordingly appropriate volumes—the list could go on to include the music which accompanies the workplace, elevator rides, convenience store shopping, banking, strolls down the sidewalks in commercial districts, mobile phone rings, sporting event lulls/intermissions, and holding for service on the telephone. Music no longer requires direct human agency for its performance, and thus transcends the former constraints of time and space that delimited the possibilities of its presentation. However, electroacoustic technology does not only serve to pluralize opportunities for musical listening outside of conventional performance, but has also become an integral component in its functioning system.

Although our familiarity with electroacoustic technology renders it fairly invisible during the performance itself, this technology, in its manifold uses, is obviously in constant operation during many varieties of performance, is what makes many forms of contemporary music at all possible—neither rock, nor rap, nor electroacoustic music itself could exist or be presented independently of this technology. Frith points to this degree of integration between music and electroacoustic technology in his article “Towards an Aesthetic of Popular Music,” maintaining that any understanding of modern music necessitates an engagement with this relationship:

The history of twentieth-century popular music is impossible to write without reference to the changing forces of production, electronics, the use of recording, amplification and synthesizers, just as consumer choices cannot be separated from the possession of transistor radios, stereo hi-fis, ghetto blasters and Walkmen. (135)

With the exception of the drum kit, the typical rock outfit employs instruments that are almost entirely electric, sound-making objects that were never intended for purely acoustic sound, but were designed specifically to convert these acoustic vibrations into an electric signal for amplification and/or manipulation. Likewise, contemporary DJs and turntablists belonging to all genres depend on this same technology to convert kinetic energy from the
turntable stylus into electrical energy for amplification, and electroacoustic composers use this technology to first record, or even engineer sounds electrically/digitally before further manipulating them for their compositions, which are, in turn, heard via external loudspeakers. However, even the plethora of instruments which have been designed for delivering a pleasant, unamplified, and audible sound are now often amplified using either a conventional magnetic pickup (e.g., acoustic guitar, double bass) or microphones (e.g., drums, sitar) in order to meet the volume required in a given performance space. Amplification technology has indeed made it possible to transcend the acoustic limitations of both the instruments and the concert space—performances for 100,000 fans would be impossible without it. However, there is a strange and unsettling corollary to this powerful expansion: the perceived need for amplification in the performance space has grown to now include the most intimate of settings, such that, more often than not, voice and instrument will be amplified even in a small café. In addition to being a background voice of everyday life, this technology is now almost invariably present in performance as well.

The Transformation of Musical Space

In his book, Attali conducts a genealogy of Western music (art and popular) in order to understand the implications of this technological shift, charting the transformation from music's origins within a collectively experienced simulacrum of ritual sacrifice, into the birth of the audience/musician dichotomy in representation, and then into the inception of the technological era and the concomitant burgeoning of repetition. This technological turn no less radical, Attali illustrates how representation has not been totally supplanted by repetition, that there still remains a contemporaneous co-existence of the two. In delineating their respective boundaries, Attali points to the inherently singular, ephemeral nature of the
former, in contrast to the mass-produced banality of the latter: "In representation, a work is generally heard only once—it is a unique moment; in repetition, hearings are stockpiled." (41). Hillel Schwartz relays the astonishing statistics from this era of representation in his book *The Culture of the Copy: Striking Likenesses, Unreasonable Facsimiles*:

Around 1900, there was drama enough just in hearing a long piece of music repeated. "The zealous concert-goer," wrote a commentator in 1908, "living at a metropolitan center, would hear in a decade perhaps ten performances of Beethoven's Third and Fifth Symphonies, four performances of one of Mozart's last three symphonies, as well as of Schubert's Unfinished and Schumann's First and Second." (375)

Music—now recast as object in addition to process—opens a host of new physical and social arrangements, one of the most important of which is the spatial configuration of its audience: solitary listening becomes possible. Thus, Attali primarily conceptualizes this technology in terms of its power to actually transform, and, in a sense, immobilize, the traditional social relations of music appreciation in erecting what is, in contrast, a new system of musical consumption based on the isolated experience and fetishized prestige of the individual:

In this network, each spectator has a solitary relation with a material object; the consumption of music is individualized, a simulacrum of ritual sacrifice, a blind spectacle. The network is no longer a form of sociality, an opportunity for spectators to meet and communicate, but rather a tool making the individualized stockpiling of music possible on a huge scale. Here again, the new network first appears in music as the herald of a new stage in the organization of capitalism, that of the repetitive mass production of all social relations. (N 32)

Throughout his text, Attali relays an unquestionable concern for the loss of sociality in music, that its new possibilities of presentation have rendered undesirable or ineffectual the community-enhancing function of live performance. While it may seem that Attali's lamentations (though based on accurate descriptions of the new listening) are perhaps misguided yearnings for musical relations which still thrive around the world, namely, those of live musical performance, in fact, people's attitudes towards performance and their own agency as amateur musicians were altered significantly by the advent of repetitive listening. In her article, "Machines, Music, and the Quest for Fidelity: Marketing the Edison
Phonograph in America, 1877-1925,” Emily Thompson contends that available technologies of sound reproduction did indeed temper the attendance of live musical performance and the will for amateur music-making in the home:

As phonographic technologies provided a means to mass-produce identical recordings of musical performances, people increasingly experienced music not by attending unique live performances or by producing music themselves in their homes but instead by purchasing recordings, carrying them home, and reproducing the music on machines in their parlors, whenever and as often as they desired. (132)

Despite early fears that it would be supplanted by our affinity for secure, automated repetition, and despite the plethora of present choices for listening to recorded music, live musical performance still enjoys an indisputable popularity: on any night of the week, in almost any major centre, people are holding and attending live concerts of various styles and sizes, and testimonials of the rare but intense experiences they have in these performances remain an inadequate expression of their magnitude.

And yet, there is only partial solace to be taken in the still undeniably strong pulse of live performance both quantitatively, in the brute facts of its occurrence, and qualitatively, in its always unpredictable but resilient power of affect and affirmation. While even the fierce integration of electroacoustic technology into daily practices of music listening may seem to stand in contradistinction to live performance, a new ontology of music thus erected operates to pervade what often seems an autonomous realm. Simultaneously elucidating this autonomy and interrelation, Attali boldly contends that the lure of possessing music has grown stronger than our satisfaction with its evanescence:

The love of music, a desire increasingly trapped in the consumption of music for listening, cannot find in performance what the phonograph record provides: the possibility of saving, of stockpiling at home, and destroying at pleasure. (N 84)

This technology, which cannot be understood independently of a corollary ontology, alters significantly the concept of what a musical performance can and ought to be, a notion that
displays itself to be remarkably consistent with Attali’s comments on the listener’s compulsion for material artifact if we examine carefully the practice of making unsanctioned recordings of live performances, or, ‘bootlegs.’

**Capturing the Live: Exclusions, Deferrals, Future Pleasures**

During the last of their three LA performances, Shellac were (as usual) confiscating temporarily the recording devices, and permanently the cassette tapes of those attempting to make bootlegs of the performance. The resulting dialogue that took place during one of their signature question-and-answer periods illuminates the tension between the ephemerality of the event and what reveals itself to be a ferocious desire to capture and possess it:

*Thwarted bootlegger to bassist Bob Weston*: “Will I get my tape back at the end of the show?”

*Bob Weston to bootlegger*: “No. It will be destroyed.”

*Guitarist Steve Albini to bootlegger*: “What you’ve just done is remove yourself from everyone else around you. What you’re doing now is working on your own little project for the internet, which you can do at home.”

*Bob Weston to bootlegger*: “This is it. This is the show.” (Shellac performance)

Cynics would suggest that the band was merely trying to protect their autonomy over the nature and sale of their ‘product,’ but given Albini’s notoriously steadfast, quasi-socialist work ethos, the fact that the members of the band have other full-time jobs and do not consider themselves to be professional musicians but instead, as Albini puts it in the interview with Sweeney, “part of the underground of hobbyist musicians,” perhaps there are also other more significant motives behind the seizures (Shellac). Weston’s last remark in the exchange suggests an opening into the tension between the live event and the repeatable one: “This is it. This is the show.”

Weston’s blunt appeal to the obvious seems to carry with it an implicit sense of evanescence, that documenting this event for a later re-visitation debases the very quality that
makes it special, namely, that it disappears. Although the band performed three times in the short span of 24 hours, one of the would-be bootleggers still felt compelled to hurl rather vicious and profane insults at Weston upon the return of his recording device—three live performances were, in their ephemerality, inadequate in comparison to the chance for material artifact. As Attali declares in the above quote, the new will for permanence and possession, for product, now exceeds the fulfillment derived from the intrinsically fleeting nature of live sound. Again, even in its seeming absence, in the live event, the technology of repetition makes itself present.

There is, however, another kind of presence manifest during the performance which, if Albini is correct in his charges against bootlegging, would not be committed to tape. Within this suggestion lies an implicit critique of positivistic interpretations of music, a questioning of the notion that a self-contained entity, the work, operates independently of its performed context. To understand this different form of 'presence' not predicated upon the physical occurrentness of either the work, or the audience, we can return to Heidegger’s hermeneutics of Ereignis and preserving in “The Origin of the Work of Art”: “Preserving the work does not reduce people to their private experiences, but brings them into the truth happening in the work. Thus it grounds being for and with one another as the historical standing-out of human existence in relation to unconcealment” (OWA 193).

In light of Heidegger’s relational understanding of art experience, Albini’s comments about the self-excluding essence of bootlegging elucidate a quiet resilience, a resistance to repetition inhering in the hermeneutic unfolding of meaning in the performance itself, a meaning which is radically mercurial, shifting, contingent upon the presence, not understood in terms of physical occurrence, but rather the engaged there-ness of the audience members.
themselves: paradoxically, one seeks to capture an event that, in the very act of this attempted captivation itself, becomes at least partially negated through a concomitant self-exclusion. According to Albini, the bootlegger was, in Heideggerian terms, attempting to 'reduce' the collective preservation of the live performance down to his own 'private experience,' one entirely bound up with precisely the kind of schema Heidegger seeks to destabilize, namely, an object-oriented notion of art borne of modern aesthetics. One acquaintance of mine, reflecting on her own past instances of successful bootlegging, surmised that there had been a strong correlation between the shows she chose to bootleg and her lack of enjoyment of the live show itself. In retrospect, my own attempts at bootlegging have yielded a similarly anaesthetized experience of these performances.

Oriented towards the future moment when one can resurrect this music, the need to engage with the event no longer shows up with the same urgency. Presence, and the joy in experiencing that 'now' is, it seems, deferred in order to dwell within a different kind of pleasure: an equivocal blend of the delight in transgression and covetous, object fetishism of a rare and supposedly fleeting event. Furthermore, this recording to which the bootlegger directs his or her enthusiasm, will, because of the technical limitations of such clandestine recording, be of such poor audio quality that one would doubtfully ever give it a second or third listen—what is important is the reserve quality, the knowledge that the event could be re-visited if so desired, the security that one holds a secret cache of experience 'just in case.' There exists a kind of perverse, Platonic asceticism in all this, in which a voracious will for permanence, for that which is knowable, attempts to make consolation for the tragic disappearance of the fugitive. We may recall this process of deferral in the self-exclusion of bootlegging when Attali declares that "with records, as with all mass production, security
takes precedence over freedom; one knows nothing will happen because the entire future is already laid out in advance. Identity then creates a mimicry of desire and thus rivalry; and once again repetition encounters death” (N 121).

**Vision and Voice: Debating Authenticity and Agency in ‘Live’ Performance**

The preceding example shows quite clearly the manner in which a technology of repetition, even in its supposed absence, brings itself to presence: terms like ‘live’ and ‘performance’ are cast into ambiguity, into their own oscillation of presence and absence. The complexity which emerges in conjunction with the proliferation of sound recording and sound reproduction technology notwithstanding, the boundaries of what qualifies, and what fails to qualify, as a musical performance are still fundamentally ambiguous. A plethora of acoustic events which operate independently of electroacoustic technology evoke this equivocality; with varying degrees of human agency: the sung tones of a priest to a congregation, the church bells which are rung out over a bustling market, the wailing ambulance siren that brings traffic to a standstill, and the train which pulls into a station full of commuters could all arguably be included at some position along the performance continuum. Experimental ‘performers,’ in setting up collective listenings to just these sorts of real-world phenomena, have been implicitly questioning conventional categorizations of music and its performance for many years. In its inaugural issue (circa 1995), the British music fanzine, *Obsessive Eye*, lists three such exercises, part of the “Field Trips Thru Found Sound Environments” which took place in New York state during the ‘60s: “An audience expecting a conventional concert or lecture is put on a bus, their palms are stamped with the word ‘listen,’ and they are taken to and thru an existing sound environment” (Obsessive). Although no further description of the field trips is given, the publication does provide the
The year, month, and location of the listening events as: Consolidated Edison Power Station, New York City, in February 1963; Hudson Tubes (subway) between 9th Street Station and Pavonia in March 1967; and New Jersey Power and Light Power Plant, South Amboy, New Jersey, in July 1968. The performer becomes the person who initiates the collective listening experience, who transforms an insensate background noise into a foreground performance of, if not music, at least somewhat meaningful, communicative sound.

However, this re-definition of performer and performance occurred well before the ‘60s, and is best exemplified in the radical experimentalism of American composer John Cage. In his article, “Heidegger’s Hölderlin and John Cage,” Michael Eldred contends that Cage’s explorations in the contingencies of musical performance as exhibited in works like his “Imaginary Landscape,” a piece in which the arbitrary time and place of its performance determines the sound of twelve different radios each of which constantly moves among several random frequencies (and may or may not correspond to any station), and paradigmatically in his infamous “4’33’,” in which the performer performs only silence, manifests and articulates the musical event as this spatio-temporal demarcation, the naming of the sonic event as a performance: “Music is thus redrafted as listening to what happens in a timespace frame” (Eldred). Paradoxically, the listener too becomes a ‘performer’ as their participatory listening also articulates this musical location. Eldred quotes composer Robert Ashley’s impromptu musings as they appeared in Jill Johnston’s 1962 review of Cage’s book Silence: “[T]he ultimate result would be a music that wouldn't necessarily involve anything but the presence of people. That is, it seems to me that the most radical redefinition of music that I could think of would be one that defines ‘music’ without reference to sound” (Eldred). However, despite the well-documented nature of Cage’s experiments, as well as those of his
contemporaries and his followers, popular consciousness has been largely unwilling to assimilate this new schema of performance and instead, still operates within a framework determined by mostly visual criteria—the question of performativity is the question of physicality.

**Performativity as Physicality**

To determine whether a given acoustic event meets the criteria of a performance, the first question is inevitably one of human agency: “Is anybody doing anything?” However, this ambiguous phrasing more accurately stands for a more detailed enquiry: “To what degree are someone’s actions responsible for the sounds we hear?” It becomes immediately obvious that the very notion of ‘performance’ is so inextricably bound with a sense of active gesture, enactment, motion, of something we discern through a primarily visual means, that it is difficult to separate the sound of music from the human movements responsible for its character.

This visuality in mind as we turn towards the technological realm of performance, its scope and intensity of application become clear if we examine attitudes towards the use of prerecorded sounds, or even entirely prerecorded works, in contemporary musical events. To varying degrees, many teen pop acts, rock bands and DJ turntablists alike make use of prerecorded sounds or samples during their live performances. For some, the prerecorded component is the instrumentation while the singing remains live; for others, it may be the converse; it may even be the entire performance itself. In many cases, no effort is made to conceal this disembodied sound; in other cases, it is deemed necessary. In these latter cases, rarely any dissention is voiced by the audience when this performance features some semblance that it is happening at that moment and as a direct result of their physical
gestures—many audiences either do not know, or do not care that Milli Vanilli’s singing, or the DJ’s scratch wizardry is, in terms of its live quality, a well-orchestrated illusion, motion synched to music provided by a DAT cassette. As Truax declares, the reason for this is obvious: “The sophistication of modern recording studio techniques cannot, in fact, be easily reproduced live; hence, the frequent dissatisfaction when the live experience cannot match the prerecorded one which the listener has come to prefer...” (116). As Milli Vanilli proved during the pivotal moment when their samplers crashed and their prerecorded vocals began barking out a glitch-ended loop, some audiences would quite admittedly prefer the kind of standardized security of the repeated: the audience merely laughed at the spectacle’s collapse as the panicked duo fled the stage in embarrassment. The band was humiliated, but the crowd shrugged it off (Behind). Attali is thus absolutely correct to declare that

little by little, the very nature of music changes: the unforeseen and the risks of representation disappear in repetition. The new aesthetic of performance excludes error, hesitation, noise. It freezes the work out of festival and the spectacle; it reconstructs it formally, manipulates it, makes it abstract perfection. (N 106)

And while the semi-illusory nature of this live performance certainly does not negate the affirmative quality of the event for that audience, those performances which must be prerecorded, namely, those of electroacoustic music, rarely receive the same charitable treatment when categorized in terms of their performativity. The comparatively slight movements required of an electroacoustic composer while performing a piece register below the performance threshold for some, levying charges against its existence as ‘merely prerecorded.’ However, assuming the popular rumour that some turntablists use a prerecorded tape to ensure a quality performance, audiences seem entirely content to class a DJ concert as performance largely because of the hand movements synched to the prerecorded tape (unbeknownst to the listeners), whereas electroacoustic performances, in
their lack of deceit about the prerecorded nature of the work, seem to evoke a greater skepticism even though the composer is mixing and fine-tuning the piece to mesh with the performance space as the audience hears it, as it is being ‘performed.’ Quite likely a latent schema still ingrained by music’s pre-technological origins in live playing, the criteria being applied is clearly that of gesture. Conversely, where an examination of electroacoustic technology usually exhibits it to be a mediating force for live performance, in this case it is the original ontology of live music which disrupts the technological. Or, is it indeed the case of a technological understanding mediating that of the live? Are listeners now so accustomed to the fact that disembodied sound from a loudspeaker no longer denotes direct human agency that, in the absence of bold physical gestures, the signification of death overrides that of life? Is the cynicism we feel in the insincerity of repeated sound, those voices you hear in the labyrinth of everyday telecommunications that you now understand as a semblance of language, is that so strong that we have no faith in the sincerity of the technological? What emerges from this analysis is a thorough interpenetrability, a complex intermingling of the live and technological realms, suggesting a de-stabilization of their respective autonomies, that there are no longer any pure ontologies of ‘live’ and ‘technological’ to speak of.

Cage’s “4’33’,” demonstrates that performance is a spatio-temporal listening location first demarcated by the performer, and then enacted and completed only in collaboration with an audience. In Heideggerian terms, the musical work unfolds as an event in its co-creation by creator and preserver alike.

And yet, despite this re-instigation of the sonic, a paradigmatic example of the hermeneutic co-creation of musical performance shows that a certain visuality still stands as crucial for the success of live performance. When walking towards my class from the parking
lot at Simon Fraser University, I heard the sound of bagpipes in the distance, playing for a few moments and then disappearing again. Although I had to walk in that direction anyway, I noticed that I felt (not at all surprisingly) drawn to this music. I continued walking and was soon able to see two pipers facing an area of grass that sits on the precipice of a grassy square known as the Academic Quadrangle. As I kept walking towards my class, these two pipers were soon flanked by a few more who joined in the sporadic and impromptu bursts of music. Although all the pipers wore the traditional stockings, kilts and jackets, their casual pacing motions and intermittent playing made it obvious that they were not, at the moment anyway, performing in any serious manner, that is, there seemed to be good evidence to suggest that it would not have been demarcated, in advance, as a performance. The presence of what looked to be a professional photographer who began setting up his equipment some 15 metres away seemed to confirm this suspicion: this was some kind of photo shoot, not a concert. I sat down on the stairs surrounding the grassy area to enjoy the sounds and noticed that others had done, and were continuing to do, the same—despite its impromptu, casual nature, this music was calling people to witness, summoning them to, as Heidegger describes, ‘preserve’ these sounds. Totally unexpectedly, these sounds catalyzed the concurrent self-fabrication and unfolding of a musical performance (in the Cagean sense). Strangely, the very unperformative quality of this event, with its constant oscillation of silence and playing, afforded the possibility for a rather unique listening experience rife with the opportunity for almost clinical observations, potentials for comparisons between the voice of the everyday world, and the voice of the musical. Perhaps an obvious fact, or perhaps an overly dramatic interpretation to uphold, but when the pipers would play, ‘things’ would change drastically. The normally banal background sounds of the wind, birds, traffic, and distant construction
noise were drowned out by the volume and magnitude of the bagpipes, only to rush back in again, now somewhat obtrusively, when the pipers would stop playing. And again, when the pipers would start up, their music acted to contain the space and the people in it. That space, during some of the musical moments, showed up in its holism, as making sense, only to dissolve again into the fragmented nature of the everyday when the music would stop. Would there have been a ‘performance’ without those who sat down to preserve this? Would anyone have sat down to preserve this had the sounds been delivered by two loudspeakers rather than a handful of pipers? Do we have here one possible interpretation of music that involves, as Robert Ashley mused, nothing but the presence of people? Despite the success of Cage’s experiments which show that a more complex epistemology of performance is at play, the visual component within this schema again manifests itself as crucial to a concept of live performance.

While it is possible that the sound quality of live bagpipes exceeds their reproduced, amplified sound, it still seems that the greater appeal for the audience is the sense of gesture, human agency, of a reassurance of life. There is a sincerity associated with the presence and sound of those performers that quite justifiably abates when replaced by disembodied, and thus potentially repeated, sound. However, given the aforementioned commingling of technological and live ontologies, it is also not surprising that, even during this wonderfully spontaneous, evanescent musical event I was enjoying so much, my thoughts also wandered into the domain of repetition: “I should really try and get a CD of this pipe band.” But again, the situation resists such a simple explanation: at the same time, it is the holistic experience of this event which fuels the desire for its simulacrum in solitary home listening.

**Studio Separations**
As this technology transforms the social relations of musical consumption in the home, and, more equivocally, in live performance itself, its advance has seen it likewise disrupt the ‘liveness’ of performative relations in the studio as well. And yet, this project of capturing the intensity of the live is a dubious proposition from the outset. Anyone who has attempted to record sound, whether musical or otherwise, in the hopes of replicating it ‘as it happened’ knows the futility of this exercise: there are only greater and lesser degrees of authenticity, never an attainment of its purity. Still, at one point in history, recording was, even in its inevitably mediating role, a documentation of a performance (with or without an audience), with musicians playing simultaneously, as they would for a group of listeners. However, the rupture of space and time already in operation soon intensifies, investing itself into the recordable performance itself. Before a further extension to include the variable of time, audio engineering first dissolved the performance-oriented, spatial arrangement of the musicians into separate, more manageable acoustic spheres. In his article, “The ‘sound’ of music: Technological rationalization and the production of popular music,” Paul Théberge quotes F. Everest’s remarks on the somewhat equivocal but detrimental effects of spatially and acoustically separating musicians in the recording studio:

As musicians are separated from each other physically and acoustically, something tends to be lost in the music in the effect the musicians have on each other. The intangible ‘something’ that makes a group successful is undermined to a certain extent.... Physical separation, extremely dead studio acoustics, opaque baffles, and isolation booths achieve channel separation all right, even to the extent that the musicians often cannot hear one another. (102)

Similar comments from other musicians expressing this inexpressible ‘loss’ seem almost ubiquitous—the vitality which unfolds while the group plays together as a whole becomes muted, dulled, a simulacrum of their original cohesion. There is here another glimpse that the energy in performance resists being captured. However, although this recording technology has at this point only restructured the spatial arrangement of the musicians, a severance of
their temporal unity is soon to follow. As Théberge is keen to point out, this spatial separation which offers the possibility of a clean track, free of bleed from other instruments, later extends into the domain of time to enact a further 'clinicization' of the studio and a final dissection of collective performance. An exponential intensification of the disruption in time and space made possible by Edison's phonograph, multi-track technology (first invented by Les Paul in the late '40s) uses the same principle of marking and transplanting to concoct an illusion of a singular, acoustic event which, in fact, never took place (Roberts). Analogous to erecting a building from the bottom up, this technology allows musical works to be constructed piece by piece, layer by layer, to ensure not only channel separation, but more importantly, that the best performance from each of the musicians is captured for the recording. In its most extreme application, musicians who have never met, or are now no longer living, can exist in collaboration on an album. The sociality that was once inherent in music in all facets of its production—relations between audience members, relations between audience and musician, and relations between the musicians themselves—appropriately disintegrates first within the studio, and later in the end result towards which this entire enterprise points: home listening. However, this disintegration of the social, although complete in the studio, resists a total dissipation in the world outside the studio, in the world of music enthusiasts.

Resilience: The Liveness of the Live

Attali criticizes this dissolution of collective participation spawned by the system of repetition, contrasting it with the new spatial arrangement of music consumption in which "the listener in front of his record player is now only the solitary spectator of a sacrificial vestige" (N 120). And, while it is indisputable that electroacoustic technology exerts this
transfigurative power, an ability to reduce the formerly collective nature of musical listening down to what could be considered as the most abstract form, Attali's model systematically excludes the value in the social interdependence which surrounds this admittedly isolated act: concerts, conventions, and casual conversations with other music enthusiasts still accompany, possibly even enhance, this solitary, introverted listening. Even as the locus of music moves, via fetish with material artifact into the living rooms of the individual and away from the sociality of the ritual, these consumers still operate within variously-sized communities bonded by a common interest and participation in consumption and performance alike. Fragmented, shifting, surrogate, and thus themselves evanescent, these communities transcend geographic proximity and instead revolve around the hub of musical interest, one that is, also admittedly, most often ensconced within a system of economic exchange. With the exception of some underground bartering networks of music fans (including Napster and similar technologies), and rare and/or small performances organized as free events, involving oneself in music is to involve oneself in the exchange of capital. Initiation into many music communities requires only the means to acquire the specific, definitive accoutrements of a given league: seminal recordings on sanctioned formats, associated magazines/literature, appropriate fashion, and concert tickets are available to anyone possessing the desire and the means to obtain them. In short, identity can, and must, be claimed through choice of purchase.

In exploring the possibility of a true alternative, it seems impossible to stop short of espousing either a complete, systemic restructuring of capital exchange or its converse, a radically hermetic, isolated existence free of any social communication with others. If to be a music appreciator in the West is to necessarily be a music consumer, if one's identity as a
music enthusiast, or even as a caricatured type of music buff, is primarily forged and solidified within a host of economic relations, then the choice of what kind of commercial networks one becomes involved in stands as the fundamental domain, the only opportunity of resistance.

Attali, however, sees these relations as primarily inauthentic, arguing that, prior to their soothing effect of community, they are first and foremost an endemic expression of the kind of fear leveraged against the consumer in the momentum of repetition's own social system:

Repetition becomes pleasurable in the same way music becomes repetitive: by hypnotic effect. [...] In a society in which power is so abstract that it can no longer be seized, in which the worst threat people feel is solitude and not alienation, conformity to the norm becomes the pleasure of belonging, and the acceptance of powerlessness takes root in the comfort of repetition. (N 125)

The difficulty, however, is accurately discerning what the nature of this norm is, what constitutes blind conformity, or innovative venture; what constitutes the mainstream, and what the marginal—belonging to any community larger than oneself beckons charges of simply conforming to one's own subcultural norm. But these associations, necessarily based upon shared social practice, are what lend our lives meaning. To rally against them on the premise that they hinder freedom is to participate in a self-imposed exile, to believe in the Enlightenment myth of the unencumbered self, and thus, to marginalize the importance of the very sociality Attali seems to embrace. Paradoxically, this false conception of self seems to be part of the foundation for the alternative music practice Attali espouses.

Although Attali's denigration of object fetishism and isolated consumption of recorded music is clearly predicated on a privileging of the social, collective, and thus communicative aspect of live musical performance, his vision of resistance at first seems based on a similar auto-aurality:
[W]e can envision one last network, beyond exchange, in which music could be lived as composition, in other words, in which it would be performed for the musician’s own enjoyment, as self-communication, with no other goal than his own pleasure, as something fundamentally outside all communication, as self-transcendence, a solitary, egotistical, noncommercial act. (N 32)

His vision of the new composition is the anti-Dionysian: an Apollinian narcissism engaged in a metaleptic chain. While he does concede that the work of this new composer may be heard by others, its own creative glance would now be fixed inward, rather than towards a live audience, or potential audio consumer. However, as the book funnels into the final chapter dedicated to sketching out the framework of this new composition, Attali’s model of self-enclosing creativity opens somewhat to include the participation and appreciation of others, imploring us to

create our own relation with the world and try to tie other people into the meaning we thus create. That is what composing is. Doing solely for the sake of doing…. Playing for one’s own pleasure, which alone can create the condition for new communication. (N 134)

To be fair, Attali’s pessimism and precariously-balanced individualism seem entirely justified and reasonable upon witnessing, even for five minutes, the state of mainstream music today. And his prophesies for this new composition have been remarkably true: a burgeoning of independent record labels, a resurgence in amateur music-making, and even the advent of an entirely new musical vocabulary via computer-based composition, followed (at their own paces) the publication of his book. However, the scope of this change also depends on where one fixes one’s glance. ‘Playing for one’s own pleasure’ and ‘doing solely for the sake of doing’ have never really disappeared, but survived wherever and whenever someone whistled a tune, drummed out a pattern with their fingers, or played the fiddle with their family in the kitchen. Of course, even at this suggestion, Attali has opportunity to interject: which tune were they whistling? In how many families did the fiddle playing
subside, or even stop? Again, the live and the technological intermingle in a perpetual
dialectic of unrest—of Apollinian solipsism and Dionysian ritual.

In analyzing the complex interplay between the ontologies of the live and the
technological there exists an indisputable ambiguity of their autonomies—indeed, their
distinction remains more than dubious. And yet, there are interstices of resistance against
repetition which inevitably occur: certainly there are networks of ‘new composers’ who are,
if not operating completely outside a capitalist system of exchange, hold it at bay and
maintain their prime focus, as Attali suggests, on the act of music-making. But the resistance
against repetition is even more than human resolve: to crudely appropriate Heidegger’s
recurrent formulation of essence, it is the liveness of the live: the live is a resistance. It is a
resistance because it is unnecessary, inefficient, and unpredictable. It is the countervailing
force which balances the will for its converse: necessity, efficiency, predictability—drives
which mark this age of technicity in its own essence. Even in some of the most steadfast
attempts at turning live performance into repetition—indeepndently of conscious human
subversion—this energy was able to maintain a resilience against mass-produced repetition:
the example of the bootlegger at the Shellac show; the rare and magnificent breakdown in
 technological consistency which yielded noise out of a concerted arrangement for its
absence; Everest’s comments about the loss of that certain, inexpressible something in
 spatially separating performers in the studio; the spontaneous preservation of the pipe band
which catalyzed the creation of a performance (one that would have to be live and not
recorded); and those events which are recorded, but still exist as representation—all display
this resistance. Despite the transformation of the listening public’s attitudes into what seems
an almost ubiquitous preference for mass-produced repetition, our own resilience is required
to preserve and foster the seeds of resilience inhering in the music itself so that we may, as Attali puts it, "make the free and revocable choice to interlink with another's code—that is the right to compose one's life" (N 132).
CHAPTER IV

SOUND AND POWER: EXPLORING FOUCAULT’S PERFORMATIVITY

Re-interpreting Nietzsche and Heidegger: Foucault on the Disciplined Mass

Despite the overwhelming influence Nietzsche has exerted on Foucault’s philosophy, both thematically, in terms of his focus on the exercise of power in relation to the body, and methodologically, in executing his philosophy as genealogy, Foucault never explores what is for Nietzsche an essential extension of this relation: the operations of music in terms of power. In fact, Foucault’s few comments on music occurring in one of his later interviews gesture more towards the pluralism of the later Heidegger than the explosive frenzy of the Dionysian. After paraphrasing Nietzsche’s enthusiasm for “the primordial pleasure to be found in inflicting, and suffering, pain” (from Beyond Good and Evil), James Miller (in his Passion of Michel Foucault), then contends that “Discipline and Punish recapitulated Nietzsche’s argument, but it also extended it, showing how the modern human sciences had taken over the role of Christianity in disciplining the body...” (219). In his 1975 work, Discipline and Punish, Foucault’s analysis of power in relation to the body—and, most notably for the present purposes, groups of bodies—is an examination that conveys a sense of human performativity that wholly surpasses the very provisional account of corporeality suggested in the works of Nietzsche and Heidegger. Indeed, Foucault’s pluralistic understanding of these disciplinary strategies suggests an essential transience of these techniques (that their operations are by no means limited to a single cultural practice), and thus intimates a possible transmutability into the domain of musical performance. As Foucault explores how the mobilized mass—from factory workers to military trainees—is infused with power, the way that these relations of power are, paradoxically, as productive as
they are constraining and as anonymous as they are seemingly locatable, we can observe some parallel relations in the performing mass of the musical event. Although there are many other texts in which Foucault addresses the question of the body, *Discipline and Punish* is the key text for understanding corporeality in musical performance. However, to open this discussion on Foucault and music, we will first turn to his interview with Boulez, in which he makes some comments that indicate his relation to the later Heidegger specifically in terms of the event.

**Foucault on Music, Plurality, Community**

Moderated by Pierre Boulez and appearing in Lawrence D. Kritzman’s *Michel Foucault: Politics, Philosophy, Culture*, some of Foucault’s comments from the 1983 discussion on “Contemporary Music and Its Public” betray a stance on art and community characteristic of the middle and later Heidegger (Dreyfus, HFSAP). Also urging us to see music as an event involving (to phrase things in Heidegger’s terminology) ‘creators’ and ‘preservers’ alike, Foucault first reminds us of music’s ritual history before turning his discussion to the affirmative quality of rock:

One must take into consideration the fact that for a very long time music has been tied to social rites and unified by them. Not only is rock music (much more than jazz used to be) an integral part of the life of many people, but it is a cultural initiator: to like rock, to like a certain kind of rock rather than another, is also a way of life, a manner of reacting; it is a whole set of tastes and attitudes. Rock offers the possibility of a relation which is intense, strong, alive, “dramatic” (in that rock presents itself as a spectacle, that listening to it is an event and that it produces itself on stage), with a music that is itself impoverished, but through which the listener affirms himself; and with [avant-garde] music, one has a frail, faraway, hothouse, problematical relation with an erudite music from which the cultivated public feels excluded.

One cannot speak of a single relation of contemporary culture to music in general, but of a tolerance, more or less benevolent, with respect to a plurality of musics. Each is granted the “right” to existence, and this right is perceived as an equality of worth. Each is worth as much as the group which practices or recognizes it. (Foucault, PPC 316)

In this exchange with Boulez, Foucault is quite keen to stress the historic role of music as a marker, a signal of a cultural event rather than as some aggregate of works, and in so doing,
begins to move the discussion away from the initial topic of the avant-garde and its self-segregating life and into an exploration of music as a space of community identity. Foucault sets rock (or its specific sub-genres) as an important hub of individual identity, a cultural space of affiliations and alliances that radiates beyond the moments of musical reception, despite—as he is clear to mention—its inherently deficient musical properties. Foucault not only rejects judging the value of a particular music on its formal musical qualities, independent of its affirmative role in various communities; in fact, he equates music’s value with this very role—like Heidegger (and Nietzsche to a certain degree), Foucault shifts the focus away from the isolated work, judged according to its aesthetic principles, and onto music’s role as a cultural event. As such, Foucault argues for a musical pluralism, grounded in the communities from which these musics spring, in which they are ‘preserved’ and which they serve to enhance. Echoing Foucault’s remarks, Frith too declares the space of music as one of identity, difference, and plurality:

Music constructs our sense of identity through the experiences it offers of the body, time, and sociability, experiences which enable us to place ourselves in imaginative cultural narratives.... Identity is necessarily a matter of ritual: it describes one’s place in a dramatized pattern of relationships—one can never really express oneself “autonomously.” Self identity is cultural identity; claims to individual difference depend on audience appreciation, on shared performing and narrative rules. Such rules are organized generically: different musical genres offer different narrative solutions to the recurring pop tensions between authenticity and artifice, sentimentality and realism, the spiritual and the sensual, the serious and the fun. Different musical genres articulate differently the central values of the pop aesthetic—sight and emotion, presence and absence, belonging and difference. (PR 275-6)

In his article comparing the two thinkers, Dreyfus contends that for the later Foucault and the later Heidegger, it is the plurality and anarchic genesis of these types of ‘gatherings’ that open the possibility for temporary ruptures in modern technicity. Despite Foucault’s characteristically Nietzschean resistance in endorsing any kind of stability—of history, of the body, of the self—Dreyfus declares that “the Heideggerian picture of the way marginal practices coalesce to form stable unities comes more and more to dominate Foucault’s
account of the history of the West” (HFSAP). Indeed, Foucault’s insistence that different musics live as the communities which preserve them certainly gestures towards the centripetal inclusion of Heidegger’s Ereignis.

In Heidegger’s own turn towards this marginality, his notion of preservation becomes paradoxically more concentrated, more potent as it spreads out to subsume a more differentiated, more local notion of Ereignis—a space of relations that Dreyfus appropriately sees embodied in the everyday gatherings of friendship: “Practices that produce such focal things as a celebratory meal or playing music together resist the push towards dispersion which is the flip side of technicity’s tendency toward totalization” (HFSAP). In his article, “Semiosis of Listening: The Other in Heidegger’s Writings on Hölderlin and Celan’s ‘The Meridian,’” Krzysztof Ziarek also distinguishes the essence of the later Heidegger’s notion of preserving in terms of an aural Mitsein, declaring that “the question of being as such or of event (Ereignis) would have to be approached from the point of view of listening and ‘friendship’ with others rather than through the conjunction—the Same (das Selbe)—of being and human being (thinking)” (130). If we concede the appropriateness of including the later Foucault’s remarks on music and community, for him and the later Heidegger, Ereignis becomes the allowance of zusammen(ge)hören, ‘that which belongs together,’ and finally now, as the etymology has always suggested, ‘that which belongs together in listening.’

Music as Means of Political Training, Music as Means of Political Resistance

While it seems that the politics of marginal practices in the later Heidegger and the later Foucault might yield, by way of extrapolation, similar portraits of the musical event, Foucault’s Nietzschean focus on the body as a site of power suggests probing the ‘micro-physics of power’ of Discipline and Punish in order to better understand the corporeal
component of musical performance. In fact, though not a surprising oversight where Heidegger is concerned but a more conspicuous omission in the case of Nietzsche, the importance of the body—a body that moves and touches—in musical performance has been all but suppressed as a theme in our discussion. And yet, the entrance into a somewhat different relation both with one's own body, as well as the bodies of other audience members, is, in some varieties of performance, an integral part of what sets the event as distinct from the everyday.

Indeed, it is almost exclusively in the extraordinary events of the day—those events that in some way stand apart from everyday normalcy—that we see a temporary suspension of the taboo against close and unnecessary physical contact with strangers: public celebrations, demonstrations, and musical performances are the most conspicuous examples of this social anomaly. As Canetti explains, the prohibition against touching pervades our normal daily activities, and it is only in certain types of gatherings and under certain circumstances that this sanction is made to recede:

The repugnance to being touched remains with us when we go about among people; the way we move in a busy street, in restaurants, trains or buses, is governed by it. Even when we are standing next to them and are able to watch and examine them closely, we avoid actual contact if we can.... It is only in a crowd that man can become free of this fear of being touched.... The crowd he needs is the dense crowd, in which body is pressed to body; a crowd, too, whose psychical constitution is also dense, or compact, so that he no longer notices who it is that presses against him. As soon as a man has surrendered himself to the crowd, he ceases to fear its touch. Ideally, all are equal there; no distinctions count, not even that of sex. The man pressed against him is the same as himself. He feels him as he feels himself. Suddenly it is as though everything were happening in one and the same body. This is perhaps one of the reasons why a crowd seeks to close in on itself: it wants to rid each individual as completely as possible of the fear of being touched. (15-6)

In those musical events in which the audience is expected to stand, often the normal stricture against this physical contact is ignored: it is not unusual for people to crowd in close together even when plenty of other space is available. For as long as the music plays, this physical closeness remains acceptable, but its finish ushers in a gradual re-initiation of usual distance-
standing practices until the crowd finally disperses completely—in short, the music sustains
the abatement of this rule. However, as Canetti notes, it is not this physical closeness that is
the essential mark of the crowd—this spatial arrangement of bodies exists as much in the
subway car as in the café concert—but rather the possible corollary consolidation of its
‘psychical constitution’ or mood that is the latent end and true cornerstone of the gathering:
“It is for the sake of this blessed moment, when no-one is greater or better than another, that
people become a crowd” (18). And as the music stops and the crowd dissipates, so does the
relative density of its mood—the sense of unity, as Canetti also contends, is at base illusory
and ephemeral.

Indeed, the history of live musical performance is not only the history of its sounds,
of its noises and of ways of listening, but also the history of its motion, its gestures, and its
behaviours—in Foucauldian terms, it is the history of a physical training. Contrast the
portrait of the 18th century audience Goehr provides at the beginning of our discussion—a
scene of sociality, of request and applause—with Canetti’s picture of the contemporary
concert scene founded upon physical restraint:

Here everything depends on the audience being completely undisturbed; any movement is
frowned on, any sound taboo. Though the music performed draws a good part of its life from
its rhythm, no rhythmical effect of any sort on the listeners must be perceptible. The
continually fluctuating emotions set free by the music are of the most varied and intense kind.
Most of those present must feel them and, in addition, must feel them together, at the same
time. But all outward reactions are prohibited. People sit there motionless, as though they
managed to hear nothing. It is obvious that a long and artificial training in stagnation has been
necessary here. We have grown accustomed to its results, but, to an unprejudiced mind, there
are few phenomena of our cultural life so astonishing as a concert audience. (37)

Where we would generally speak of the way that music determines movement, the way that it
seems to ‘make us move,’ Canetti’s example shows clearly that those social codes particular
to each brand of performance are able to make the audience channel, or in this case, repress,
these energies accordingly. By examining the trajectories of power Foucault charts in the
disciplined mass, we can then relate this training to Nietzsche’s Dionysian and Heidegger’s notion of attunement to the event—to understand it, in fact, as part of a social mood.

In *Discipline and Punish*, Foucault explores the history of the body in terms of its training, impelling the reader to recognize its instability, its contingency, in fact, to address its *public* agency as an instrument in various systems of power. Indeed, following Nietzsche’s tenet of the will to power as an arrangement of drives, Foucault understands the body as a shifting multiplicity of forces, constructed and configured by the anonymous and greater network of power-relations in which it is perpetually involved. An important part of his project in *Discipline and Punish* is to question the assumption that since contemporary Western society has curtailed its use of violent punishment as a disciplinary strategy, we have thus ‘progressed beyond’ the exercise of a crude and brutal form of domination over others, past a subjection that is ‘merely’ physical. Rather, for Foucault, the present age is marked by a more insidious brand of domination and subjection actually due in part to an illusory belief in such progress. As Foucault puts it in an interview from 1977, “[P]ower in the West is what displays itself the most, and thus, what hides itself the best…” (PPC 118). Asserting that even where overt physical violence is not present and other forms of discipline are preferred, nonetheless, “it is always the body that is at issue—the body and its forces, their utility and their docility, their distribution and their submission” (Foucault, DP 172).

This prompts him to investigate the more subtle operations of power, making detailed observations about what he calls a “new ‘microphysics’ of power” as visible in the performed gestures of the disciplined individual, as well as the collective, body (Foucault, DP 183). Thus, in defining the essence of discipline as this emergent relation of “docility-utility,” Foucault explains that “[g]enerally speaking, it might be said that the disciplines are
techniques for assuring the ordering of human multiplicities” (DP 181,207). Referring to the mechanistic relationship to the body associated with the military trainee and the factory worker, Foucault contends that

in the course of the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries, the disciplines became general formulas of domination.... The historical moment of the disciplines was the moment when an art of the human body was born, which was directed not only at the growth of its skills, or at the intensification of its subjection, but at the formation of a relation that in the mechanism itself makes it more obedient as it becomes more useful, and conversely. What was then being formed was a policy of coercions that act upon the body, a calculated manipulation of its elements, its gestures, its behavior.... [I]t defined how one may have a hold of others’ bodies, not only so that they may do what one wishes, but so that they may operate as one wishes, with the techniques, the speed, and the efficiency that one determines. Thus discipline produces subjected and practiced bodies, “docile” bodies. Discipline increases the forces of the body (in economic terms of utility) and diminishes these same forces (in political terms of obedience.) (DP 181-2).

Foucault is clear to maintain that these techniques were by no means limited to one disciplinary institution, but that he is, in fact, interested in attempting to “map, on a series of examples, some of the essential techniques that most easily spread from one to another” (DP 183). As Michael Mahon writes in *Foucault’s Nietzschean Genealogy: Truth, Power, and the Subject*, “Other examples could have come from techniques of colonization, slavery and child rearing. Thus, Foucault insists that disciplinary penal practices were consistent with general cultural practices” (148). To be sure, Foucault does not intend to suggest that these transitive techniques are present within musical performance, or any art event for that matter. However, the notion that the body is trained, held, and made docile within a repetition of coded gestures is a model that can be transposed onto an understanding of the “hold over others’ bodies” that Nietzsche and Heidegger have both conceptualized through the Dionysian and attunement, respectively—seen in relation to these two thinkers, Foucault’s attention to the reciprocal relation between physicality and sociality can broaden our model to include this component in its situatedness.
Indeed, there is an undeniable sense of performativity that courses through Foucault’s work, and not simply in his descriptions of bodies in motion, but most importantly and essentially in his insinuation of a certain surrogacy in these gestures, of an agency that is as Heidegger’s *Dasein*, that is neither wholly internal nor wholly external, but ‘is’ as being-in-the world—that sense of an ontological (dis)possession in which one only ‘is’ as an attempt to be some self as determined by the other. However, in his written works, Foucault neglects embarking upon any significant investigation of sound and power—indeed, it is the explorations of movement, gesture, and the sway of the gaze—it is *visuality*—that thoroughly dominates his analysis of power-relations. And yet, just as the etymologies of the German words *Stimmung* and *gehören* have suggested an essential musicality in mood and belonging, Ihde reminds us that the Latin etymology of the English ‘obey’ elicits an integral link between voice and the exercise of power:

Foucault’s concern with the body nevertheless remains an appropriate focal point: power is kinetic, power *moves*, but power also speaks to catalyze, accompany, and announce the motions of its systems. Power is articulated in the voice of God, the voice of the leader, in the sounds of natural disasters, and in the sounds of violence and war.

Indeed, clearly showing his debt to Foucault’s rhetoric, Attali contends that understanding the role of sound in the exercise of power is key, that it is first and most elementally the sonic phenomena of the world, and not the visual ones, which announce the operations of power in linguistic, social, and corporeal systems:

The languages which relate hearing to the invading features of sound often consider the auditory presence as a type of “command.” Thus *hearing* and *obeying* are often united in root terms. The Latin *obaudire* is literally meant as a listening “from below.” It stands as a root source of the English *obey*. (LV 81)

More than colors and forms, it is sounds and their arrangements that fashion societies.... Everywhere codes analyze, mark, restrain, train, repress, and channel the primitive sounds of language, of the body, of tools, of objects, of the relations to self and others.
All music, any organization of sounds is then a tool for the creation or consolidation of a community, of a totality. (N 6)

Sound and music then, by Foucault's own account, can be understood as disciplines, as 'techniques for assuring the ordering of human multiplicities.' As Attali later declares, "Music, the quintessential mass activity, like the crowd, is simultaneously a threat and a necessary source of legitimacy; trying to channel it is a risk that every system of power must run" (N 14). Discussing the exercise of such power in one of Foucault's most conspicuous themes, namely, military discipline, in his book, The Twisted Muse: Musicians and Their Music in the Third Reich, Michael H. Kater describes rhythm precisely in terms of its use in training soldiers to move, and thus feel, like a single entity:

Quite apart from its military purposes in war, the march was a conditioner of totalitarian rule. "The more uniformly and rhythmically all are marching in step, the greater will be the inner unity of the troops," preached Ludwig Kelbetz; "for the musician this physical-rhythmic basic training is of particular significance." (142)

Rhythm is a discipline. As discipline, it forces the audience into a Foucauldian docility, that is, into a complacent pliability, in the same fashion as the other disciplines: as the reference point of performed repetition.

A casual glance at history suggests that the power-elites of many political systems have long understood music in the terms Attali describes above, and thus, apparently also concur with the conclusion we were able to draw out of Foucault: as a discipline, music can mobilize a mass, and as such, can arrange these bodies into performing sanctioned or unsanctioned motions. Unwilling to risk 'channeling' this volatility, governments like the Iranian Ayatollah have simply chosen to ban music altogether. Conversely, others have elected to employ music, kept on a short rein, as another arm, or rather, another mouthpiece, of the state. While discussing the ideal state in the Republic, Socrates warns that "the guardians must beware of changing to a new form of music, since it threatens the whole
system. As Damon says, and I am convinced, the musical modes are never changed without change in the most important of a city’s laws” (99). And in the Chinese “Record of Music” from the Li chi, dated at approximately the third or second century B.C.E., Confucius writes that the “the object of the ancient kings in their practice of music was to bring their government into harmony with those laws (of heaven and earth). If it was good, then the conduct (of the people) was like the virtue (of their superiors)” (106). Attali also notes that, in the middle ages, “Charlemagne would forge the cultural and political unity of his kingdom by imposing the universal practice of Gregorian chant, resorting to armed force to accomplish that end” (N 14). However, examining the most conspicuous and thorough example of this conjoining of music and politics, Kater describes in detail the myriad ways that the Nazi administration sought to invest itself into nearly every aspect of German musical life:

From the moment it came to power in 1933, the Nazi regime was bent on receiving and coordinating musical practice in conventional institutions such as schools and even the churches as well as the family, which continued to be regarded as the smallest cell in the racially determined body politic. Music was viewed as a convenient form of cement between the rulers and their people. As Joseph Goebbels had long since found out, music possessed vast propagandistic potential through which the collective mood of the subjects could be controlled; it could also be used to dress up important nationalistic incentives for presentation to the public, and it could serve as a vehicle for various regime messages and slogans. Starting at the lowest echelon of communal living, the primary social unit of the family, the medium to effect this musical bonding was Hausmusik, that is, music performed in one’s own house or home. The term Hausmusik was not an invention of the Nazis, nor of course was the actual article, but it had never before been politicized to the extent that they would attempt. (130-1)

From ancient China to Nazi Germany, hierarchical power has seized the opportunity to employ music as a means of political training. And yet, as we are prepared to implicate music as the piper’s song that leads us into these described—and other more horrific—ends, as we remind ourselves that it was Adolf Hitler’s favourite opera, Die Meistersinger von Nurnberg, that sounded the beginning of the infamous Nuremberg rallies, what we ought to be maligning is not music at all, but rather language: it is only through language, either in the
text of the work itself, or in the specific framing of its presentation, that music becomes a call to terror. Music is undoubtedly intoxicating, but it is most often the linguistic discourse surrounding its presentation which suggests the particular ways that this energy is to be channeled. Where we shudder in pitied disbelief at the frightening, nearly hypnotic levels of solidarity initiated by the sounds of the Nuremberg rallies, we must also consider the gathering power that the song “We Shall Overcome” held for those at the forefront of the Civil Rights movement in America—a movement that, as Ron Eyerman and Andrew Jamison declare in their book, *Music and Social Movements: Mobilizing Traditions in the Twentieth Century*, “was a singing movement par excellence” (171). It is because of the manner in which this movement was framed, in musical text and cultural agenda, that the strength of its musical solidarity invigorates not fear, but hope. As Attali notes, “With music is born power and its opposite: subversion” (N 6; my gloss). Or, as Foucault puts it in more general terms in a 1977 interview with Bernard-Henri Lévy, “I am just saying: as soon as there is a power relation, there is a possibility of a resistance. We can never be ensnared by power: we can always modify its grip in determinate conditions and according to a precise strategy” (PPC 123).

To take another example of how music might serve as a space of resistance, during the ‘90s, the feminist-inspired punk rock movement known as Riot Grrrl was able to mobilize strategies that would successfully turn musical events across North America into temporarily affirmative spaces. As Theo Cateforis and Elena Humphreys relay this sense of liberation in “Constructing Community Identities: Riot Grrrl New York City”:

Where women musicians in punk traditionally had found themselves objectified under the gaze of a primarily male audience, Riot Grrrl performances subverted such situations. During Double Zero’s performances, band and audience were equal participants in the masquerade. (330)
And yet, this passage points to the very same paradox from *The Birth of Tragedy*: there seems, in this situation, a simultaneous increase and leveling of power: increased in the Nietzschean sense of an individual’s enhanced sense of power, but also equalized, leveled, in terms of individual agency in the event itself. Indeed, reading Foucault’s sense of the performing body in *Discipline and Punish* with the musical event in mind suggests a more complex account of this group dynamic. And while it is necessary to locate the individual body as the mechanism of the performance, Foucault’s rather complex, hermeneutic notion of power-relations as operative in the disciplined mass can contribute to a more comprehensive understanding of the body’s place within the collective experience of music, within, as Attali puts it earlier, the ‘consolidation of a community.’

As a public ritual and an expression of community, the musical event has its own set of codified bodily gestures. In precisely those moments when one feels the ecstatic sense of freedom and self-abandon in moving to the music, one’s body is not only ‘held’ by the power of music but by the coded norms of gesture peculiar to that event. As Nietzsche observes, in the Dionysian dithyramb “the entire symbolism of the body is called into play, not the mere symbolism of the lips, face and speech but the whole pantomime of dancing, forcing every member into rhythmic movement” (BoT 40). Foucault discusses the simultaneously comparative, differentiating, and homogenizing character of such normalization:

[It refers individual actions to a whole that is at once a field of comparison, a space of differentiation, and the principle of a rule to be followed. It differentiates individuals from one another, in terms of the following overall rule: that the rule be made to function as a minimal threshold, as an average to be respected, or as an optimum toward which one must move.... In a sense, the power of normalization imposes homogeneity; but it individualizes by making it possible to measure gaps, to determine levels, to fix specialties, and to render the differences useful by fitting them one to another. It is easy to understand how the power of the norm functions within a system of formal equality since within a homogeneity that is the rule, the norm introduces as a useful imperative and as a result of measurement, all the shading of individual differences. (DP 195-6)
As the micro-physics of power is "exercised rather than possessed" it is "sometimes extended by the position of those who are dominated" and similarly, for visual surveillance in "its functioning... from top to bottom, but also to a certain extent from bottom to top and laterally..." (DP 174,192). For example, in a musical event that often lauds its anarchic nature, hardcore punk performances show that they too operate according to a set of coded movements, enacted within this hermeneutic of the collective. At one of their Vancouver shows, the lead singer of New York's H20 decreed that he wanted "to see a 'circle pit'" at the front of the crowd. When the band started the next song, listeners nearest to the stage began moving—half-dancing, half-running—in a counter-clockwise direction, shoving and being shoved in the melee—a scene perhaps resembling the Dionysian. For the next two songs, this enthusiastic, ritualistic display continued. We can only assume from the body language of these listeners that they were experiencing something intense, perhaps even a sense of frenzy, as they danced to the music. However, what looks to be an anarchic sense of freedom is experienced within a musically-enhanced docility. Paradoxically, the individual feels this exalted sense of power in submitting to the music and, in a strong physical sense, other listeners—this ecstasis is centered upon a willful submission, a kind of masochistic pleasure in subjecting oneself to, as Foucault states, 'a rule to be followed.' Again, we are reminded that even the Dionysian is, like the musical event itself, framed in its trajectory and, as such, never wholly severed from its Apollinian companion.

Dionysus Revisited: Nietzsche, Heidegger, Foucault

The hermeneutic perspectives of Nietzsche, Heidegger, and Foucault all, in various ways and to various degrees, suggest a difference between the voice of music and the voice of the everyday, that a certain shift occurs when something is, for example, sung rather than
spoken. And while the consolidation of community is a consistent theme in their discussions of listening and music, the enigma of this presence amidst a radical historicality, and, in corollary, the equivocal relations between individual and collective, are approached somewhat differently by each thinker. Sometimes employing a language all their own, and sometime appropriating the language of others, these thinkers—Nietzsche in explicitly musical terms, Heidegger across existential, aural, and aesthetic planes, and Foucault according to corporeality and power—all attempt to convey a hermeneutic understanding of collective human relations that, in all these capacities, contributes to a more situated understanding of the musical event. As we have seen them in relation to each other, and in relation to those on their trail in the disciplines of musicology and acoustic science/communication, all three thinkers help us move away from the concept of an isolated musical work and point to musical performance as an important and extraordinary event that, literally and metaphorically, gathers people together. This tri-partite genealogy, composed of its own consonant and dissonant elements, offers a heterogeneous understanding of performance as this gathering, a differentiated model that finds its scope in the congruencies and confrontations arising within, and out of, this dialogue.

The pivotal question of this gathering, however, must be addressed—as our Heideggerian critique of Nietzsche has demonstrated—also as fusion, not only in its potential conflict. And yet, as we have revisited the Dionysian in relation to Heidegger and Foucault, we have not negated its overall intensity, but have instead shown the breadth of its relevance to a host of contemporary musical events: within these spaces remains the possibility of transformation and ecstasy. However, through Heidegger's discussion of mood—through the thinker who appears to be the least Dionysian of them all—we have developed a more
differentiated sense of the Dionysian that, in one sense, brings out the essence of what this
god of music and intoxication ought to be: anarchic, unpredictable, contingent. In the
moment of the shift from the everyday to the musical, ecstasy breaks things into this
contingency, however brief this rupture might be—it is the moment when we ourselves are
confronted with this contingency, of how to channel this potential.
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