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Emotions in Music
Ambiguity of Musical Expression

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Introduction. Theoretical assumptions

The problem of emotion in music is often considered in the context of other issues in the field of aesthetics of music: the broader issue of the meaning of music and the problem of musical expression. The mutual involvement of these three concepts and the different meaning attributed to them requires careful formulation of questions, with attention to their order. An attempt to answer a question will make sense only if a question is raised taking into account the particular solution of the problem from the lower level. Otherwise it is easy to get entangled in a snare of conceptual chaos and artificial *aporia*, it is easy to get lost in a thicket of different solutions constructed with a use of the same terms but with a different meaning – usually interconnected differently. Thus it will be necessary – unless you want to shut yourself in a single theory – to develop a common ground of discourse enabling the juxtaposition of different but equally interesting theories. The theories, to which I will refer are: theory of Susanne Langer, Leonard B. Meyer and Peter Kivy.

I will be interested in investigating the following issues: *what* kind of emotions we assign to music, what is their nature and what is the relationship between emotion and sound structures. In other words: *how* the relationship that allows to link these – seemingly – remote categories is possible and finally – *where* these emotions are. After a preliminary discussion on the meaning and emotion in music I will examine some issues related to the problem of expression in music. While the first part of this paper will be accompanied by a willingness to maintain a fairly broad perspective, in the next sections I will make the necessary clarification, narrowing, summary and finally – when all the cards are already on the table – I will present possible criticism of some of the solutions adopted earlier.

Introduction to the problems of meaning and emotion in music

Both the concept of meaning and emotion in music were and still are the cause of many disputes – as often found among philosophers as composers, performers and critics. While in the case of the first concept disputes concern the nature of musical meaning, whereas in the case of emotions associated with music opinions are divided as to their nature, and as to their very existence.

Leonard B. Meyer points to two fundamental views on the meaning of music. "The first main difference of opinion – says Meyer¹ – exists between those who insist that musical meaning lies exclusively within context of the work itself, in the perception of the relationships set forth within the musical work of art, and those who contend that, in addition to these abstract, intellectual meanings, music also communicates meanings which in some way refer to the extramusical world of concepts, actions, emotional states and character". The first group Meyer calls "absolutists", while the second – "referentialists". It should be noted that – despite staunch disputes between referentialists and absolutists – there is no sufficient reason to conclude that these standpoints are mutually exclusive – there is therefore no sufficient reason to reject any of them. These arguments „are the result of a tendency toward philosophical monism rather than a product of any logical opposition between types of meaning."² Moreover, these two types of meaning can successfully coexist in one work. This division crosses the distinction between two aesthetic views on the relation of emotion and music (or more specifically: whether such relationship exists). These standpoints are often called "expressionistic" and "formalistic." Expressionists contend that the meaning of music is associated in some way with emotions, and the formalists – on the contrary. Theoretically from a junction of two divisions we should get four different standpoints, which tentatively can be called as follows: absolutism-formalism, absolutism-expressionism, referentialism-formalism and referentialism-expressionism. The first two standpoints show that both formalists and expressionists may be absolutists, i.e., both may see the meaning of music as being essentially intramusical (non-referential) – the difference between them lies at the level of understanding this meaning: according to formalists understanding is purely intellectual, expressionists would

1 Leonard B. Meyer, *Emotion and Meaning in Music*, The University of Chicago Press 1956, p. 1.

2 Ibidem, p. 1.

link it with some kind of emotional experience. These viewpoints – as emphasised by Meyer – are not incompatible. Indeed they consider the same musical processes and similar psychological behavior of the different and complementary points of view. The next two standpoints see musical meaning in something beyond the music: expressionists in emotions, and formalists – in any other referential object not being emotion. Meyer – as it seems – rightly marginalizes group of formalist expressionists, saying that "almost all referentialists are expressionists believing that music communicates emotional meanings (...)." ³

So we have three viewpoints on the meaning and emotion in music, two of which relate to the emotion in the music and therefore will be the object of our interest in the further part of this paper. These standpoints are: absolute expressionism and referential expressionism. "The former group – says Meyer⁴ – believe that expressive emotional meanings arise in response to music and that these exist without reference to the extramusical world of concepts, actions, and human emotional states, while the latter group would assert that emotional expression is dependent upon an understanding of the referential content of music".

Emotions in music as a response to an embodied musical meaning

Leonard B. Meyer widely explains, what musical meaning is from the viewpoint of absolutists – intramusical embodied meaning. Single tone or a series of tones become meaningful not because it designates extramusical objects, they become meaningful only in so far as it points to, indicates, or implies objects of the same kind – other tones. Thus intramusical meanings may be understood as a complex of interrelationships taking place in a structure of a musical work – interrelationships closely associated with the way in which musical structures affect the listener. The emotion would then be a specific reaction appearing in a process of understanding such defined musical meaning. Psychology – as we can see – does not occur at the time of introducing emotions to the theory – it is already

³ Ibidem, p. 3.

⁴ Ibidem, p. 3.

present at the stage of explanation what the meaning in music is. Let us therefore take a closer look at Meyer's theory and its psychological foundation in particular. Referring to the psychological theory of emotion, mostly based on studies of John Dewey and John Thomson MacCurdy, Meyer undertakes analysis of an emotional experience and applies solutions obtained in this field to examine emotional states associated with a reaction to music. The central premise of the psychological theory of emotions used by Meyer is that "emotion or affect is aroused when a tendency to respond is arrested or inhibited."⁵ This assumption is well illustrated by the following example presented by Meyer: habituar smoker wanting to smoke reaches into his pocket and finds no cigarette, he remembers moreover that there is no cigarettes left in his house and that stores in his areas are closed. It is very likely that he will respond in an emotional way – he will feel restless and irritated. In other words, a tendency is inhibited or arrested, if for some reason it can not be executed.

Meyer separates emotions (affects) and emotional (affective) experience indicating differences between them. „Thus while affects and emotions are in themselves undifferentiated, affective experience is differentiated because it involves awarness and cognition of a stimulus situation which itself is necessarily differentiated.”⁶ Since affective experiences differ due to stimulus situation, we can ask what type of affective experience is caused by the music stimulus. Is music capable to evoke love, anger, sadness or joy in listeners? According to musical absolutism the answer will be negative. „For in so far as the stimulus situation, the music, is non-referential (...), there is no reason to expect that our emotional experience of it should be referential.”⁷ Besides non-referential character of affective experience induced by music stumulus, Meyer points to another relevant difference between a musical affective experience and an everyday affective experience made in response to other stimulus situations. Daily experience is more accidental, in art inhibition of tendency becomes meaningful because the relationship between the tendency and its necessary resolution is made explicit and apparent – they are resolved, they conclude. How can we apply this theory in order to describe musical affective experience? It is necessary to examine how music raises and inhibits tendencies. Meyer tries to transfer notions taken from general psychology to notions more appropriate for music –

5 Ibidem, p. 14.

6 Ibidem, p. 19.

7 Ibidem, p. 20.

notions of anticipation and suspension. „If tendencies – says Meyer⁸ – are pattern reactions that are expectant in the broad sense, including unconscious as well as conscious anticipations, then it is not difficult to see how music is able to evoke tendencies”.

Anticipations may be more or less precise. A piece of music can – within certain style – indicate to its continuation in a unequivocal way, which corresponds to an equally clear anticipation of the listener familiar with this style. But when the tendency is inhibited and the expectation is not fulfilled, there is a feeling of suspension and uncertainty about the further course of the music piece. The state of suspension occurs due to the fact that a given piece of music – after the initial failure to fulfill expectations – may be linked to several alternative and equally probable consequences. Meyer summarizes these considerations, referring to the previously adopted assumption: „Affect or emotion-felt is aroused when an expectation – a tendency to respond – activated by the musical stimulus situation, is temporarily inhibited or permanently blocked.”⁹

But what are these expectations? Meyer draws a general distinction between those expectations that arise out of the nature of human mental processes – the ways in which the mind perceives, groups and organizes the data presented by the senses – and those expectations based upon knowledge of the particular style. Moreover – as Meyer claims – there is a subtle interaction between these two types: „The mind, for example, expects structural gaps to be filled; but what constitutes such a gap depends upon what constitutes completeness within a particular musical style system.”¹⁰ A musical style is understood as a complex system of – both horizontal and vertical – sound relationships, some of which are more possible, and therefore more expected than others. A musical sequence implied – within one style – by its predecessor Meyer calls a norm; sequence that is less possible and therefore frustrating listener's expectation is a deviation in this style. Each deviation occurring on each architectonic level of music, whether in a melody, harmony, rhythm or even in a way of performing, each aberration from the style (also in a narrower meaning: a style of a particular composer or a particular musical work) will – according to Meyer's theory – lead to an inhibition of a listener's expectation and therefore to an affective reaction.

8 Ibidem, p. 25.

9 Ibidem, p. 31.

10 Ibidem, p. 44.

Emotions in music as its referential meaning

Let us have a closer look at a different type of emotions in music, namely extramusical emotions, which existence is postulated by referentialists. A main question now is how it is possible that a piece of music can refer to something of a different kind, something that is not a musical object itself, or to be more precise: how music is capable of mirroring feelings, emotional states or moods. Different estheticians found different solutions to answer this question. It seems though that their theories are based on a common ground – a concept of a reference mechanism. The main object of our interest in this part of this paper will be two significant and influential theories on this field – theory of Susanne Langer and theory of Peter Kivy.

The common ground of referentialists is a general concept of associations shared in common by a group of individuals within the culture – associations allowing to link some aspects of musical organization with extramusical experience.

A condition, under which reference is possible, would be then an intersubjectivity of certain association leading to this reference. Such association – to fulfill this condition – must be based on either certain conventions or natural similarities between the musical structures and non-musical objects, or both at the same time. Manifestation of these objects (such as emotions, moods) whereas have to be previously standardized within the particular culture.

What is this mentioned similarity? Between which properties of musical structure and referential object does the analogy occur? An answer for these questions designates different approaches within this viewpoint. Each time it is about the analogy occurring between a musical structure and a non-musical object – in fact it is the analogy between a musical phenomenon and – on the other side – an essence of emotional experience (its abstract form) or a symptom (manifestation) of this experience.

The first standpoint is represented by Susanne Langer. The starting point for Langer is a new – inspired by the philosophy of Ernst Cassirer – understanding of a musical meaning, according to which music is neither a discursive language (having fixed, conventional connotations) nor a direct, spontaneous expression of emotions – it is rather a symbolic form of expressing them. „If music – claims Langer¹¹ – has any significance, it is

¹¹ Susanne K. Langer, *Philosophy in a New Key. A Study in the Symbolism of Reason, Rite, and Art.*, Harvard University Press 1942, p. 218.

semantic, not symptomatic. Its <<meaning>> is evidently not that of a stimulus to evoke emotions, nor that of a signal to announce them; if it has an emotional content, it <<has>> in the same sense that language <<has>> its conceptual content – *symbolically*. It is not usually derived *from* affects nor intended *for* them; but we may say, with certain reservations, that it is *about* them. Music is not the cause or the cure of feelings, but their *logical expression*.”

If it is to be possible, music would have to have „formal characteristics which were analogous whatever it purported to symbolize.”¹² Then she affirms that „musical structures logically resemble certain dynamic patterns of human experience (...)”¹³ and that „there are certain aspects of so-called <<inner life>> – physical or mental – which have formal properties similar to those of music – patterns of motion and rest, of tension and release, of agreement and disagreement, preparation, fulfillment, excitation, sudden change, etc.”¹⁴ Music – although it reflects „dynamic tonal form”¹⁵ and „morphology of feeling”¹⁶ in the sense that it doesn't express anger or sadness or other feelings we can formulate in discursive language – yet it „can *reveal* the nature of feelings with a detail and truth that language cannot approach.”¹⁷ Linking music and emotions, in this case, is possible just by the analogy between the essence of music and the essence of human inner experience – both music and the inner experience are reducible to the opposite pair of tension and relaxation.

As we said previously, the analogy can occur between musical structure and a symptom of emotion, namely a manifestation of human feelings, human behaviour, body language, face expression, etc. This analogy is possible because of the way of our perception of music, well described by Roger Scruton: „We hear this life and movement *in* and situate it in an imagined space, organized, as is the phenomenal space of our own experience, in terms of 'up' and 'down', 'rising' and 'falling', 'high' and 'low'. (...) To describe it [music – L. B.] we must have recourse to metaphor, not because music resides in an analogy with other things, but because the metaphor describes exactly *what* we hear, when we hear sounds as music.”¹⁸ Taking this as a premise, it is relatively easy to find the analogy

12 Ibidem, p. 225.

13 Ibidem, p. 226.

14 Ibidem, p. 228.

15 Ibidem, p. 238.

16 Ibidem, p. 238.

17 Ibidem, p. 235.

18 Roger Scruton, *Aesthetics of Music*, Oxford University Press 1992, p. 96.

between, let's say, contour of a phrase and human expressive behaviour. Interpretation of this analogy moreover does not necessarily take place at the conscious level though. „Music – adds Kivy¹⁹ – is expressive of the emotions not just because it resembles expressive behavior but because we, for whatever reason, tend to animate our perceptions, and cannot but see expressiveness in them, any more than we can help seeing expressiveness in the Saint Bernard's face.” And also: „The perception of that analogy to human expressive behavior must lie at some deeper, non-conscious and pervasive level, although we can, of course, bring it to consciousness by analysis and scrutiny if we wish.”²⁰ A descending melodic line, for example, along with slow tempi, a lack of activity or low ranges may evoke the idea of despair and resignation. Emotions expressed by music in this case are well defined – according to Kivy's theory music is able to embody the garden-variety emotions, emotions we can find in every day life such as anger, sadness, joy, etc.

These two referential theories differ mainly by the way the expression proceeds. The former viewpoint (Langer's theory) we could call *direct*, while the latter (Kivy's theory) – *indirect*, because of a presence of an intermediary element, namely a standardized symptom of an emotion. It seems that this difference applies also to the character of the emotions being expressed. While in a first case emotions were highly abstract (yet detailed), were marked by ambivalence of its content (opposite – from a discursive point of view – emotions, such as joy and sadness, might be linked with the same form of expression), in the latter case emotions were well defined, determined, speakable, and associated by the convention with their manifestation. The emotive character of music (treated as its property) is thus clear and easy to interpret to the same extend as a human expressive behaviour.

The concept of a musical expression compared to previous considerations

19 Peter Kivy, *Sound Sentiment: An Essay on the Musical Emotions*, Temple University Press 1989, p. 62.

20 Ibidem, p. 172 – 173.

At this stage it is worth considering what is the connection between previously mentioned emotions and a rather ambiguous notion of a musical expression. The ambiguity is largely related to the question, in what way we combine these two concepts – the concept of a musical expression and an emotion.

In the light of generally accepted solutions in this field we can distinguish at least three concepts of a musical expression depending on the question, with which element of the series “artist-music-listener” emotions are linked. It would will be respectively: (1) the level of a composer and a performer - a phenomenon of expressing their own emotional state through music: music expresses an emotional state of its creator, (2) the level of a musical work – a phenomenon of being expressive of emotions (understood then as an trans-individual emotion, emotion *in abstracto*), often treated as a music's property or emotive character of music, (3) the level of the listener - the phenomenon of arousing emotional states in a listener. It is often claimed that standpoints, emphasizing significance of emotions on respective levels, are logically independent. The fact that composer felt sorrow while writing a piece of music does not necessarily mean that the piece expresses sadness, and vice versa. Similarly, none of these emotions need to be associated with an arousal of emotions in a listener. Would it be possible to maintain the standpoint that the listener in the audience really feels the performer's sorrow – and the latter in turn feels the sorrow of the composer? It seems inconceivable. At the same time, however, we would agree that the musician expresses something (regardless of his mood on the day of the performance) and the listeners experience various emotions. Let us examine the above-mentioned three levels associated with expression.

As we said earlier, music can designate (connote, symbolize, represent) an extra-musical object – music expresses its referential content, its emotive character being its property. Such an expression is therefore vested rather to the level of the very music than the level of its creator or a listener. It is not clear though what the relationship between such understood expression and emotions felt by a composer or a listener is. Let us start with the level of an artist. Did the composer *have to* feel sorrow while composing the piece of music, to which we assign a sad character (or: whose referential meaning is sorrow)? Does the musician performing this piece *have to* – in order to transmit composer's intentions – arouse sorrow in himself? Carl Philipp Emanuel Bach writes: “since a musician cannot otherwise

move people, but he be moved himself, so he must necessarily be able to induce in himself all those affects which he would arouse in his auditors; he conveys his feelings to them, and thus most readily moves them to sympathetic emotions.”²¹ Such a viewpoint, according to which music is a direct expression of emotions being experienced by the artist, called by Susanne Langer theory of self-expression, became popular throughout centuries. As its representatives Langer mentions Roussou, Kierkegaard, Croce, Riemann but also composers: Beethoven, Liszt, and Shuma. Langer rejects such a theory. Music – what strongly underlines both Langer and Kivy – expresses trans-individual emotions (not of a concrete human). “Moreover – adds Langer²² – it is the opinion of the average sentimental music-lover that all moving and poignant music must translate some personal experience (...).” Langer rejects this doctrine arguing in favor of denotative and connotative nature of music which – much like a language – is weaned from its ancient source in primitive forms of expression. “*Sheer self-expression requires no artistic form.* A lynching-party howling round the gallows-tree, a woman wringing her hands over a sick child, a lover who has just rescued his sweetheart in an accident and stands trembling, sweating, and perhaps laughing or crying with emotion, is giving vent to intense feelings; but such scenes are not occasions for music, least of all for composing.”²³ Strong emotions likewise demand an immediate release while the process of composing is complicated and time-consuming, requiring concentration and reflection. Secondly, it is difficult to imagine a musician which, along with the changing mood of the following parts of a sonata, would be able to induce in himself on the spot a certain state of mind – corresponding with the nature of *allegro*, *adagio*, and *presto*. Langer rejects doctrine of self-expression, which she identifies with the thesis about signalic nature of music, according to which music is a signal of a emotion felt by a composer in the very moment of composing a particular piece. Rejecting this thesis in turn lets her conclude that music – since it is not a signal – is a symbol. Music in fact does not have a signalic nature due to another, more definitional, reason: a listener is not aware of any existential correlation (conventional or natural) between a piece of music and emotions felt by his creator. The problem is that this identification made by Langer is not justified. Rejecting the thesis about signalic nature of music does not mean that music cannot serve as

21 Carl Philipp Emanuel Bach, *Versuch uber die wahre Art, das Klevier zu spielen*, Leipzig, 1925, part I, p. 85.
Quotation from: S. Langer, op. cit., p. 214.

22 Sussane Langer, op. cit., p. 215.

23 Ibidem, p. 216.

a mean of self-expression. Conclusion, that there is no known correlation between music and a mental content of its composer, does not exclude the possibility of music being an expression of real feelings – likewise, the fact, that painting does not have to be representation of a real object, does not exclude that sometimes it can be. Anyway, we got to the point that the expression on the level of music itself is independent of the expression on the artist's level.

To avoid such a confusion and to emphasize this independency, Kivy employed the following distinction: “to express” and “to be expressive of”. The former applies to the situation of self-expression in the way that a composer expressed an emotion through music. This situation, however, is – as it seems – rightly marginalized by Kivy. What he is really interested in, is the latter formulation – a piece of music is expressive of sorrow, joy, melancholy etc. The face of a St. Bernard is seen by most people as expressive of melancholy, but this is not to say that it expresses melancholy, by which we would assert that the dog is in melancholic mood. It just happens that its face resembles of human mimicry. Likewise, to say that Henry Purcell expressed anguish in his aria “When I am laid in earth” may be true, but since such a statement would have to be confirmed by consulting Purcell's biography and memoirs, it is irrelevant to the discussion about music. Whereas to say that the aria is anguished (i.e. is expressive of anguish) is to say something about the qualities of the music.

Let's have a closer look at the last level from the above-mentioned series: the level of a listener. The question will be again: what is the relationship between expressive content of music and state of mind of a listener? For Susanne Langer this issue is a part of the wider problem of self-expression. Conveying emotions through music, together with an idea of sympathetic audience, constitutes the „sentimental” theory, which was the object of her great critic. She ascertains: „Music is not the cause or the cure of feelings, but their *logical expression*.”²⁴ In a similar way states Kivy: „Sadness is a quality of the music, not a power of the music to do things to the listener.”²⁵ Both philosophers represent rather cognitivist than emotivist approach in this matter – emotions may be recognized by a listener as a property of music, not felt by him. Sad music is sad because its character, not because it arouses sadness in a listener. This approach was well depicted by Oets Kolk Bouwsma: „For

24 Ibidem, p. 218.

25 Peter Kivy, *The Corded Shell - Reflections on Musical Expression*, Princeton 1980, p. 21.

the sadness is to the music rather like the redness to the apple, than it is like the burp to the cider.”²⁶

If music had a power to make a listener sad, only people with masochistic tendencies would want to listen to sad music. There is, however, more relevant argument in favor of this viewpoint, stated by Peter Kivy²⁷. This argument is based on the assumption about necessary conditions that have to be fulfilled if an emotion is to be aroused. First, we need intentional object of our emotion. If we are sad or angry, there must be a reason of this state – failed exam or noisy neighbor interfering with your sleep. Second, the intentional object must be related to certain beliefs, such as belief that the examiner failed us on the test, the conviction that the night noises are caused by pesky neighbor and not by people on the street, etc. Thirdly, the intentional object of an emotion determines the way the emotion is perceived – we experience grief differently over a failure on the exam and grief over the loss of a loved one. Every time we declare feeling of an emotion, we should – according to this theory – be able to answer the question *what* the intentional object is, *why* it causes emotion, and *how* the emotion is felt. We will meet obstacles, when we want to answer these questions in case of garden-variety emotions allegedly aroused by music. There will not be explanation of this kind, there will not be noisy neighbor or failed exam.

At the same time we don't want to agree that listening to music is only a cold calculating. What stirs us emotionally while listening to music then? To answer this question we should go back to Kivy's assumption regarding emotions: we have to ask about the intentional object of our emotion and the belief explaining this emotion. The intentional object of it must be the music itself, its various features and – depending on our knowledge – beliefs we hold about it. „In sum, then – concludes Kivy²⁸ – what moves us in music is the myriad of ways in which music can be beautiful – or, to avoid putting too much weight on the concept of beauty, the myriad of ways music can be supremely successful, musically. And the beliefs

26 Oets Kolk Bouwsma, *The Expression Theory of Art*, in: idem, *Philosophical Essays*, The University of Nebraska Press 1969, p. 49.

27 See Peter Kivy, *Music Alone: Philosophical Reflections On The Purley Musical Experience*, London 1990, p.148-149 and Idem, *Feeling the musical emotion*, „British Journal of Aesthetics”, Vol 39, No 1, January 1999, p. 3-4.

28 Peter Kivy, *Feeling the musical emotion*, op. cit., p. 6.

listeners hold, that make it plausible to say that they are being emotionally stirred by music, are beliefs that the music is wonderful, beautiful, supremely successful in all of the ways that it can be.”

It is worth considering how to – in a light of current discussion – interpret emotion or affect described by Meyer, emotions associated with an embodied intramusical meaning of music. Where to find a place for them in this scheme? As we remember, affect is a spontaneous reaction to the stimulus of music, is an emotion induced by music and not – like referential emotions – properties of music itself. Although Kivy and Meyer describe different emotional responses to music, both approaches are an attempt to respond to the same question. Both of them distinguish between feelings aroused by music and a referential content of music. Both of them describe real, full-blooded emotions felt by a listener, having a form of some kind of nameless excitement. It would be hard though to compare these two standpoints. It is linked to the problem how much we are ready to involve science and psychology into the discussion about an art and values. In spite Kivy says that Meyer's psychological theory is perhaps true, he commits a cardinal sin of relying on a technical theory²⁹. Music is a part of our everyday life – to describe emotions aroused by it we don't need any highly theoretical explanation, likewise we didn't need it to understand anger felt toward noisy neighbor – they are well understood on a commonsense level, they are part of informal psychology. „Scientific or esoteric explanations – sais Kivy³⁰ – may come later to deepen, broaden, or perhaps even replace my explanation of how music moves (...). But unless the ordinary psychology is in place first, musical emotion sounds to me more like pathology than like art.”

After these considerations, we can see quite clearly that the concept of expression decays into at least two different meanings. We talked first about the expression of joy, love, melancholy, and the like, about expression of abstract forms of feelings, in general: about the emotions attributed to the music itself. After the rejection the concept, according to which the same emotions could be assign to a musician and a listener, we concluded that the expression of an artist and an auditor – if we want to acknowledge it on these levels at all – it must be associated with another type of emotions . These emotions, following Kivy, we called an excitement associated with a value of a musical work – excitement, each time

29 See Peter Kivy, *Music Alone*, op. cit., p. 155-156.

30 Ibidem, p. 151.

determined by its intentional object. To this group we include also – as a special kind of a stir – affective reactions described by Meyer. We can therefore talk about two different phenomena of expression: (A) musical expression related to widely understood referential emotions. A musical work *is expressive* by virtue of its nature, mood, emotive character, or symbolic content. Such understood expression is not necessarily associated with a level of musician and a listener, (B) musical expression *sensu stricto*, *expressiveness*, distinctness in the musical sense, often linked to the beauty of music, its values, and widely understood character. In this case, it makes sense to talk about music's power to move, full-fledged human emotions felt by an artist and a listener – an excitement aroused by the beauty of music or – alternatively – an affect being a reaction to music stimulus playing with listener's expectations.

Kivy, Meyer as well as Langer were aware of this ambiguity leading very often to a common fallacy of identifying emotional content of music with emotions felt by listeners. „And it may well be – notes Meyer³¹ – that when a listener reports that he felt this or that emotion, he is describing the emotion which he believes the passage is supposed to indicate, not anything he himself has experienced.” What is the relationship between these two elements? „Not only – he answers³² – do mood and connotation frequently give rise to affect but they also color and modify the affective experience evoked by the musical processes (...).” Partially in this fact Kivy sees a risk of mentioned fallacy: „when someone is moved by how beautifully sad a musical passage is, the intentional object of her emotion is (in part) the musically beautiful sadness. She perceives the sadness in the music – she is not sad. But she is in an elevated state of emotional excitement over the musically beautiful sadness. What more natural than for her to misdescribe the emotional excitement as sadness, since sadness is its intentional object? The error theory, then, is true to this extent: *sometimes*, when one is deeply moved, emotionally by a passage of expressive music, the person will mistake the emotion that is aroused for the emotion that the music is expressive of, and that is the intentional object of the emotion.”³³

31 Ibidem, p. 8.

32 Leonard B. Meyer, op. cit., p. 269.

33 Peter Kivy, *Feeling the musical emotion*, op. cit., p. 10.

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