

## Music as Knowledge of Human Beings

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“To watch Wittgenstein listening to music was to realize that this was something very central and deep in his life,” reported Maurice O’C. Drury, Ludwig Wittgenstein’s close friend. “He told me that this he could not express in his writings, and yet it was so important to him that he felt without it he was sure to be misunderstood” (quoted in Fann 1967, 67–8). While the exact meaning and import of this reminiscence remain forever open-ended, it may nonetheless suggest that Wittgenstein’s thinking about, and with music is a philosophical subject-matter in its own right, and that it may extend farther and deeper than has commonly been credited in the literature heretofore.

The purpose of this essay is to shed light on one aspect of this professed importance of music, which is related to Wittgenstein’s particular interest in the context of the intersection between interpersonal relations, the rules of evidence, and the nature of our agreement and disagreement in speech. Our interpersonal exchanges manifest a form of mutual understanding that is immediate and experienced. Yet this sort of knowledge of human beings (*Menschenkenntnis*) is actually a skill or an ability, an accomplished sensitivity to human physiognomy, an instance of “knowing-how” rather than “knowing-that.” Thus, it cannot be accounted for in strictly epistemic terms, as it admits “imponderable evidence” (*unwägbar Evidenz*) into our judgments. In Wittgenstein’s view, this deeply characterizes our human lives and our everyday exchanges with one another and with the world. Importantly, for Wittgenstein, music affords a

genuine locus, hence a myriad of natural, straightforward instructive occasions and exemplars, for this sort of knowledge of human beings.

To see and appreciate aright this nexus of ideas, we first need to carefully disentangle the two main terms adjoined in the title of this essay—music and knowledge—from common tendencies to apprehend them within the grip of certain deeply seated pictures. The bulk of this essay addresses Wittgenstein’s concept of knowledge that is appropriate to our sensitivity to human beings. As for music in Wittgenstein’s philosophy, I shall restrict myself here to the following precis of what I take to be much broader issues, which call for a full, unified treatment on another occasion.

I have argued elsewhere (Guter 2019) that, as a philosopher of music, Wittgenstein evinced a paradigm shift, which has remained by and large unacknowledged in the annals of contemporary, analytically bent Anglophonic philosophy of music. He pushed back against the idea that musical meaning is explicable in terms of a relation between the music and something else, that in this sense music is about something in the world (or in ourselves). Wittgenstein’s insight that musical meaning is an internal relation, that is, a relation that denies the separateness of the things it joins, sharply sets him apart from contemporary analytic philosophy of music, whose discussions of musical meaning hinge for the most part upon whether music is somehow related to extra-musical emotions and whether this might have anything to do with the value of music. He also pushed back against the intellectual temptation to underpin the distinction between music and language by means of a philosophical theory. In his view, the resources for drawing such a line—that is, language itself—are overwhelmed by the embedded, embodied sense of the musical gesture.

I maintain (Guter 2020) that these overarching philosophical moves were increasingly propelled and regulated in Wittgenstein's writings—quite remarkably from the very beginning—by what I call the master simile of language-as-music. The simile is based on Wittgenstein's recurrent analogy between music (a melody, a passage, an entire piece) and the 'look' or 'character' of a face. The language-as-music master simile brings to the fore all that is fluid, non-mechanical, embedded in ways of life, incalculable and indeterminate in language, first and foremost gesture and expression. It afforded Wittgenstein a spring of serviceable images for his career-long philosophical exploration of the fluidity and communicability of aspects. For him, there was no point in thinking about music without specific characterization, no point in thinking about musical sound apart from its embeddedness in a specific human gesture, that is, apart from what Wittgenstein considered to be the preconditions, and the lived, embodied realities, of musical intelligibility.

As Hagberg (2017, 73) points out, in his philosophy of music Wittgenstein recovers “a full-blooded sense of practice-focused embodiment against the abstractions of a disembodied idealism (of a kind that, given the inducements of certain linguistic forms, remain ever-present in aesthetics).” Importantly, one such abstraction is the entrenched idea of “the musical work” as has been traditionally set against the idea of “the musical event.” Wittgenstein's notion of a reciprocal action (*Wechselwirkung*), which obtains between music and language, is geared toward a conception of music as a deed, as something that people do, as an ever-open invitation to learn, listen and play. It recovers the sense in which musical performances are not merely subservient to the musical work. Rather, musical works exist so that performers will have something to perform (although a performance can surely exist also without any musical work, as is the case in non-Western or otherwise nonliterate musical traditions).

Thus, our focal point should be the kind of human encounter that is captured by that inviting German verb *musizieren*: an encounter between human beings that takes place in a physical and a social setting, through the medium of sounds organized in specific ways. One may opt to use here the neologism “musicking,” suggested by Small (1998), albeit without the extra theoretical baggage that he attached to it. According to Small (1998, 9), “to music is to take part, in any capacity, in a musical performance, whether by performing, by listening, by rehearsing or practicing, by providing material for performance (what is called composing), or by dancing.” An emphasis on “musicking” affords a prophylaxis not only against adhering to the *prima facie* autonomous “thingness” of works of music, wherein musical meaning purportedly is enshrined, but also against the customary dichotomy between active and passive participation in a performance. According to Small (1998, 10), “musicking [...] is an activity in which all those present are involved and for whose nature and quality, success or failure, everyone present bears some responsibility.”

It is difficult to demarcate Wittgenstein’s paradigm shift from within a musical culture that has become dominated by the ideal of literate performance, and more so when viewed from the vantage point of a contemporary philosophy of music, whose theories for the most part are still premised upon the conceptual primacy of “the work” and whose origins (deeply rooted in the inner/outer picture that Wittgenstein was adamant to dissolve) had made it inimical to Wittgenstein’s philosophical insights. Within such a context, the word “music” conveniently becomes equated with “musical works.” This in turn generates a host of familiar ontological questions concerning *how* and *where* such works exist. While Wittgenstein makes numerous references in his writings to specific works of music, he is not concerned with such questions at all.

Concomitantly, from within the prevailing paradigm, the perennial question “what is the meaning of music?” tends to morph into quite a different one: “what is the meaning of this work (or these works) of music?” The first question concerns music as a relational field unto itself. The second makes it necessary to search for external relations between “the work” and “the world” that we could spell out independently in generalized terms. Here theories abound. Yet Wittgenstein clearly resists the trap of reification, that is, he is unwilling to buy into thinking in terms of abstractions or ideals that supposedly lie behind and suffuse the actions. He reverts from the second question back to the first. As Drury further recalls, “I will never forget the emphasis with which [Wittgenstein] quoted Schopenhauer’s dictum: ‘Music is a world in itself’” (quoted in Fann 1967, 68). Yet he needs to do so by dissolving the two questions into one another. Wittgenstein is quite explicit about this when he writes in a 1946 passage (CV, 59–60):

Doesn’t the theme point to anything beyond itself? Oh yes! But this means: the impression it makes on me is connected with things in its environment—for example, with the existence of the German language and its intonation, but that means with the whole range of our language-games. [...] And yet there just *is* no paradigm there other than the theme. And yet again there *is* a paradigm other than the theme: namely the rhythm of our language, of our thinking and feeling. And furthermore the theme is a *new* part of our language, it becomes incorporated in it; we learn a new *gesture*. The theme interacts with language.

Wittgenstein sets out to curb the impulse to render the intrinsic, structured, or conversational sense of a thematic line in isolation from our language-games and the form of life within which they emerge. In the sense explored in this essay, musicking resonates the entire field wherein

the theme—a musical term which, significantly, patently relates to the structure of the musical work in its entirety—acquires its specific character for us, becomes understandable in some particular way. As Scruton (2004) pointed out, this is where the concept of musical understanding displaces that of musical meaning. For Wittgenstein, we can have no idea what musical meaning might be unless we have some grasp of what distinguishes the one who hears with understanding from the one who merely hears. Here we approach the intersection between interpersonal relations, the rules of evidence, and the nature of our agreement and disagreement in speech, which is the heart of the matter, as I have suggested.

To tease out this reorientation of our focus from musical works per se to musicking, we could take our lead from Wittgenstein's onetime film projector analogy (PR, 49–54, 70; WLM, 8: 49–50; BT, 494–498, 518). We seem to have two alternatives here: either to talk about the projected image, or else to talk about the picture on the film-strip itself. In the latter case, there are other clearly identifiable pictures preceding and succeeding it on the strip. Yet, when a particular image is projected and seen, no other image is there to be seen. Wittgenstein's general point in this analogy is this: "It would be all right, in case of a lantern, if pointing to one picture of the film – we say 'this is the only one which is in the lantern now': and we could call this 'real'. But if he pointed to the screen & said 'this is the only real picture' he would talk nonsense, because it has no neighbours" (WLM, 8: 49). Wittgenstein actually extended the film-strip analogy also to music by imagining also a film with a soundtrack. His point is that what produces the music (i.e., musicking) is part of the film-strip. For our purposes, we can take the philosophical adherence to the primacy of the "musical work" as an insistence on saying that the thing that we call "the work" is autonomous (hence, it behooves us to contemplate it in itself) when rendered in isolation from the whole range of our variegated

language-games (the realm of the film-strip in the analogy). Squarely, in Wittgenstein's view, we would talk nonsense.

He sets up the philosophical challenge in another passage (CV, 54; cf. RPPI, §§ 34–36), written a month or so before the one quoted above:

The melodies of different composers can be approached by applying the principle: every species of tree is a 'tree' in a different sense of the word. I.e. Don't let yourself be misled by our saying they are all melodies. They are steps along a path that leads from something you would not call a melody to something else that you again would not call one. If you simply look at the sequences of notes & the changes of key all these structures no doubt appear in coordination [*in Koordination*]. But if you look at the field in which they stand (and hence at their significance), you will be inclined to say: Here melody is something quite different than there (here it has a different origin, plays a different role, inter alia.).

Wittgenstein's unwillingness to reify the musical work (referred to here in its embryonic form as a melody) could not be clearer. It is also quite striking that Wittgenstein singles out the myopic nature of the patently generalized formal-analytic outlook that serves to compartmentalize melodies (and other musical structures) in terms of such elements as successions of tones and changes of keys. Trivially, within the scope of Western common-practice era music (Wittgenstein mentions the melodies of Schubert and Mozart in the preceding paragraph in the text), all these elements indeed "appear in coordination," that is, in accord with the hierarchic configuration of Western tonal music. But this falls short of what music needs to be for us to be able to draw in significance. We need to render music as a relational field, broaching the multifarious interrelated language games that make up "the

rhythm of our language, of our thinking and feeling”—the living, embodied “origin” of the melody, which in itself is *not yet* a melody—and the gesture that insinuates itself into our human life as if in a ceremony—the “role” that the melody plays, which is melody *no more*, but a part of the lived, embodied realities of musical intelligibility.

Here we turn to the second part of this essay. “The question really is,” says Wittgenstein (RPPI, §36), “are these notes not the best expression for what is expressed [in the musical phrase]? Presumably. But that does not mean that they aren’t to be explained by working on their surroundings.” A clearer understanding of what the phrase says is available to us, but “this understanding would be reached by saying a great deal about the surroundings of the phrase” (RPPI, §34). The surroundings of the musical phrase are what musicking shows: the uptake of interrelations between language games, broaching “the whole range of our language games.” “It is not only difficult to describe what [aesthetic] appreciation consists in, but impossible,” Wittgenstein reminds us in his 1938 lectures on aesthetics (LC, I: 20), “To describe what it consists in we would have to describe the whole environment.”

According to Wittgenstein, not all language-games function on the same logical level: some language-games presuppose familiarity with other language-games. He is very explicit about this concerning our understanding of music, as shown in the ways in which musicians prompt one another in rehearsal and laypeople guide one another in listening and responding to music (CV, 59):

If I say e.g.: it’s as if here a conclusion were being drawn, or, as if here something were being confirmed, or, as if *this* were a reply to what came earlier, – then the way I

understand it clearly presupposes familiarity with conclusions, confirmations, replies, etc.

Such interrelatedness marks Wittgenstein's distinctive move in his post-*PI* writings beyond the "meaning as use" scheme and toward the idea that at least in certain contexts we may experience fine shades of meaning (Hintikka and Hintikka 1989; 1996; ter Hark 1990; Mulhall 1990). That this notion of interrelations between language-games was absolutely crucial to Wittgenstein's thinking on aesthetics, in particular concerning musical understanding, is undeniable. Already in his 1938 lectures on aesthetics, Wittgenstein stressed the enormously complicated situation in which our aesthetic expressions have a place (LC, I: 2). They must be seen against the background of certain activities, and ultimately of certain ways of living (LC, 8; 11).

Wittgenstein's most sustained discussion of interrelated language-games concerns what he calls the 'secondary sense' or the 'soul' of words, most notably in section 11 of the so-called second part of *Philosophical Investigations*, where he asks whether Tuesday is fat and Wednesday is lean, or whether the vowel 'e' is yellow, but also in the last third of *PI* itself, where his discussion significantly broaches also musical understanding (PI, 227 §§274–6; LWI, §§795–796). An interrelated move in a language game can only be understood against the backdrop of the correlate move in a logically prior game. A secondary meaning of a given word is not a new meaning. According to Wittgenstein, one could not explain the meaning of the words 'fat' or 'lean' by pointing to the examples of Tuesday and Wednesday; similarly, one could not explain or teach the meaning of 'introduction' or 'question and answer' by pointing to examples of musical passages. One could do that only the usual way, by employing moves—verbal definitions or paradigmatic examples—in the language-game that is being presupposed. The secondary meaning of a word is its primary meaning used in "new

surroundings,” as Wittgenstein put it. This is in accord with Wittgenstein’s remark regarding “the way music speaks”:

Don’t forget that even though a poem is composed in the language of information [*Mitteilung*], it is not employed in the language-game of informing. (RPPI, §888; Z, §§160–161)

A failure to understand such interrelatedness, that is, a failure to appreciate that what is primarily a description of a perception is used now on a different plane as a finely-nuanced image, or physiognomy of an experience, would lead to an oddity of the kind envisioned (in the continuation of the passage just quoted above) in the scenario of a visitor who thinks that the playing of a reflective piece by Chopin actually conveys information, which is kept secret from him. Wittgenstein’s point is that in musicking we are characterizing, not informing. We enable one another to come to notice and appreciate a necessity one had not seen before. We offer an apt expression of the experiences involved—we reach for a certain gesture as the only possible way in which to give expression to our perception, inclinations and feelings (cf. LC, 40). Wittgenstein wrote about such a gesture that it is used “not in order to inform the other person; rather, this is a reaction in which people find one another [*sich finden*]” (RPPI, §874).

“The [musical] theme, no less than a face, wears an expression,” says Wittgenstein (CV, 85). Yet calling for the experience of such fine shades of behavior admits into our language games the kind of constitutive indefiniteness, which Wittgenstein dubs “imponderable evidence.” According to Wittgenstein, enormous variability, irregularity, and unpredictability are an essential part of human physiognomy and the concepts of the ‘inner’ for which human physiognomy serves as a basis (RPPII, §§614–615, 617, 627). Human physiognomy is fundamentally non-mechanical, that is, it cannot be recognized or described by means of rules,

and it introduces an indefiniteness, a certain insufficiency of evidence, into our physiognomic recognition that is constitutive hence not indicative of any deficiency of knowledge. Such indeterminate fine shades of behavior constitute our concepts of the “inner,” which are grounded in “patterns of life.” According to Wittgenstein (LWI, §211), “if a pattern of life is the basis for the use of a word then the word must contain some amount of indeterminacy. The pattern of life, after all, is not one of exact regularity.” Wittgenstein’s notion of ‘patterns of life’ refers to recurring—mostly behavioral and facial, but also verbal—expressions characteristic of psychological concepts, concepts of the so-called “inner.” There is not only one, or even a handful of ‘occasions’ that we might call ‘grief,’ for instance, but innumerable ones that are interwoven with a thousand other patterns. It is noteworthy that this is trivially true also in musical experience, from Pergolesi’s *Stabat Mater* to Mahler’s anguished ninth symphony. Wittgenstein’s point is that the natural foundation for the formation of such psychological concepts is the complex nature and the variety of human contingencies. Wittgenstein’s depiction of psychological indeterminacy is everywhere bounded not by rules, but by certain regularities: an order or pattern emerges from obstinate, though constantly varied, repetition; the evidence has illuminating characteristics, and our feelings and behaviors are informed by typical physiognomies.

According to Wittgenstein, our recognition and description of human physiognomy occurs while “sufficient evidence passes over into insufficient without a borderline” (RPPII, §614). Yet this uncertainty, Wittgenstein stresses, is constitutive; it is not a shortcoming, and it has no bearing on the practicality or impracticality of our concepts (RPPII, §657). This indefiniteness is in the nature of the language-game played, a mark of its “admissible evidence” (LWI, §888; RPPII, §683; Z, §374), which, according to Wittgenstein, is significantly unlike the kind of evidence used to establish scientific knowledge—it is what he calls “imponderable evidence.”

According to ter Hark (2016, 140), “imponderable evidence is evidence which can make us certain about someone’s psychological state, without our being able to specify what it is in their behavior that makes us so sure.”

Wittgenstein’s discussion of the “imponderable evidence” underlying our recognition and appreciation of genuine expression concludes section eleven of the so-called second part of the *Philosophical Investigations* (PI II xi: 240 §§358-360; cf. RPPII, §§915–38). According to Wittgenstein, imponderable evidence includes “subtleties of glance, of gesture, of tone” that serve as the basis of our knowledge of human beings—a kind of knowledge that can be learned by some, taught by some, yet only through experience or varied observation and by exchanging “tips.” Such knowledge—intimated by gestures or by “tips”—evades general formulations and carries consequences “of a diffuse kind.” Since in such language games “sufficient evidence passes over into insufficient without a borderline” (RPPII, §614), our knowledge of human beings cannot be learned via fixed rules. Indeed “there are also rules, but they do not form a system, and only experienced people can apply them right. Unlike calculating-rules” (PI II xi: 239 §355; cf. LWI, §921). To be skillful, one needs to immerse oneself in the infinite variation of human physiognomy.

For Wittgenstein, musical gesture is diametrically opposed to the concept of a mechanism (cf. *RPP I*: §324). Exact, definite calculation and prediction is conceptually detrimental to what we normally regard as human expression. He writes (CV, 83–4; cf. PI, §285; RPPII, §§614–15):

This musical phrase is a gesture for me. It creeps into my life. I make it my own.

Life’s infinite variations are an essential part of our life. And so precisely of the habitual

character of life. Expression consists for us <in> incalculability. If I knew exactly how he would grimace, move, there would be no facial expression, no gesture.--But is that true?--I can after all listen again & again to a piece of music that I know (completely) by heart; & it could even be played on a musical box. Its gestures would still remain gestures for me although I know all the time, what comes next. Indeed I may even be surprised afresh again & again. (In a certain sense.)

Wittgenstein suggests that we try to imagine “other beings” that might recognize soulful expression in music by rules, for example, people who knew only the music of music boxes (RPPII, §695; Z, §157). This thought experiment is designed to show that musical expression is constituted in such a way that an encounter with such a mechanical surrogate for expression would have a petrifying effect: “We would perhaps expect gestures of an incomprehensible kind, to which we wouldn’t know how to react” (RPPII, §696). The problem described here has nothing to do with the mechanism of music boxes—the fact that one can predict exactly what they play and how they play it—but with the possibility that such music is grammatically related to a rigid, fixed, definite physiognomy recognized by exact rules (cf. RPPII, §§610–11). In such imagined music, indeterminacy implies a deficiency in knowledge. The point is that this is *not* the case of musical expression as we know it, even in the case of music boxes.

Becoming a *Menschenkenner*, one who knows human beings, one acquires not a technique, but correct judgments by means of particular instances (LWI, §925). The imponderability of the kind of evidence, which is brought in support of such correct judgments, is significantly reflected in the way we attempt to communicate our knowledge of human beings, and in the measure for the success of our justifications. If we are successful, then the other person shows a willingness to follow the rules of the game that we are playing, that is, to use concepts based

on indefinite evidence (LWI, §927). In Floyd's (2018, 366) words, "we were given ways to see likenesses and differences, and ways to go on discussing and drawing out from the articulations further aspects of what is characterized that are there to be seen in and by means of it." This imponderable, nonreductive measure of success marks the aesthetic achievement of "getting it right."

The specificity of the musical gesture marks a shift in the interrelated language-game played. Seen from the vantage point of Wittgenstein's musicking-oriented paradigm, the music becomes "a *new* part of our language," in Wittgenstein's words, because the moment of getting it right consists in an interrelated move in a language-game, which can only be understood against the backdrop of correlate, logically prior moves in "the whole range of our language games," hence constituted indeterminately, *and* because it is internally related to the experience involved. The one who musics "resonates in harmony," as it were, with the thing understood (PG, 79; CV, 51).

For Wittgenstein, this sort of "resonating in harmony" is the hallmark of the aesthetic experience of a fitting characterization, the resolution of an aesthetic puzzle, wherein nothing has been explained away, but we have drawn our attention to something that can now assist us in recovering a sense of necessity in the given situation. To echo Wittgenstein, this is how we find one another (*sich finden*), being mutually attuned in a Forsterian moment of "Only connect!" as it were, wherein the game played has become incorrigible insofar as we "got it right." Yet Wittgenstein's insight is that no deficiency of knowledge has been addressed or rectified. "Getting it right" is part of the game; that is to say, not getting it right (at first) is part of the game as well.

It is instructive to compare the physiognomic games of musicking with what the Hintikkas (1986, 258) call “primary physiognomic language-games,” like those involved in pain behavior. As the example of a child in pain shows (PI, §244), the natural expression of pain and the sensation language based on it, which involves also the reaction of other people to these expressions (PI, §§289, 310), are grammatically inseparable from the experience of pain. So there is no way of doubting what happens in such language-games without transgressing them. One cannot drive a wedge between the experience of pain and the expression of pain (PI, §§250, 288; LWI, §203). Such a challenge would presuppose an independent link between one’s language and the world, a link that bypasses these language-games.

Hence such physiognomic games are patently incorrigible. Now the important question for our purposes is this: Is musical understanding incorrigible in the same sense? I do not think so. Contrary to the case of (genuine) pain, in musicking the question of “getting it right” presents itself as paramount. When a brain-splitting toothache strikes, there is no sense in speaking of such a phenomenon—there is simply no way of “getting it wrong.” This difference does not mean that the expressive gesture can be separated from the music played; this would not make sense. Wittgenstein explicitly maintains that one could repeat the expression that ‘accompanied’ a tune without singing it with no more success than one could repeat the understanding that ‘accompanied’ a sentence without saying it (PI, §332; LC, IV: 29).

Yet in musicking there is always a possibility of getting it wrong, and the corresponding quick-witted but fitting solution on the part of the participants in the problem, which Goehr (2016) calls “improvisation impromptu.” Goehr points out that Wittgenstein used the notion of “fitting” to capture the final relation between a term and a particular use that at first seems unexpected, incongruous, or unrecognizable. Thus, we may say that in musicking the game

could be rendered incorrigible insofar as the performer “gets it right,” and that this “getting it right” is part of the game; that is, it is not a transgression of the game, as would have been the case with genuine pain behavior. So an element of misunderstanding (in the sense of ‘not yet understanding,’ hence in need of exploring), and with it also an element of choice, is built into the interrelated physiognomic language-games pertaining to musicking. This sort of misunderstanding actually serves as the opening move in such games. Of course, misunderstanding is prevalent in such language-games precisely because of the nature of the concepts admitted in them—concepts based on imponderable evidence, namely, *Menschenkenntnis* concepts.

One of Wittgenstein’s favorite exemplars for game incorrigibility as the mark of the aesthetic achievement of “getting it right” is the puzzle of finding the right tempo for the performance of a musical work. It is noteworthy that this is a notoriously elusive task at times, a matter of searching for a fitting characterization, even in musical styles that are familiar and whose performing practices are well documented. Historically, the transition from late Baroque to early Classical music was marked by a greater sensitivity to “wrong” tempi, to the extent that entire symphonic movements by Haydn, Beethoven and especially Mozart can be distorted by a poor choice of tempo.

Now consider one of Wittgenstein’s own examples: the musical score indicates the metronome marking of “quarter note = 88,” but to play it right nowadays, he says, one must take a faster tempo, “quarter note = 94” (Z, §37). When he asks “which is the tempo intended by the composer?” it is clear that the question is meant to sound bogus. Presumably, the composer intended the music to sound “right.” Yet merely setting the metronome will not solve the aesthetic puzzle: the proof is in the playing. This is true for different musicians playing the

same piece, the same musician playing the same piece on different instruments, or the same musician playing the same piece on the same instrument on different occasions, and certainly when the same piece is played according to two very different performance practices (e.g., romantic versus historically informed performances of Baroque music).

Making a choice about tempo is an instance of characterizing, of assembling elements in a specific field of valence and possibility and contrast. By characterizing we draw in significance, evincing a physiognomy. The specificity of characterization means that in musicking we can “get it just right,” we can meet or miss the mark, so we patently need to seek the right level and arrangement of elements in order to reveal something, to discover ways in which things and possibilities are. Wittgenstein (CV, 84) wrote:

I think it an important & remarkable fact that a musical theme, if it is played <at> (very) different tempi, changes its *character*. Transition from quantity to quality.

The transition from quantity to quality is aesthetic: a transition from a conception of tempo as speed to the conception of tempo as a hierarchically emergent “property” of the musical surface as situated in a culturally entrenched practice. Wittgenstein’s twofold point is that “getting it right” pertains only to the latter, and that the transition from quantity to quality, from the inanimate to the animate (i.e., human), is nonreductive (cf. PI, §284).

Wittgenstein’s notion of quality is holistic, pertaining to the ways in which immediacy and experience are interwoven inextricably in our everyday practices, exchanges, and thoughts. Boncompagni (2018) offers an insightful comparison between Wittgenstein and John Dewey, which fleshes out the idea that this complex form of immediate understanding is essentially

qualitative, irreducible to postulated entities, and cannot be accounted for in strictly epistemic or cognitive terms. This is precisely where Wittgenstein opts to revert, as noted above, to the open-ended context of musicking, that is, to thinking about the meaning of music as pertaining to music qua a relational field unto itself. Thus, his way of thinking about our ability to discern “soulful expression in music” has nothing to do with the qualities of a purportedly autonomous work (as per the standard work-oriented paradigm, which he adamantly resisted) and everything to do with the qualitative dimension of human life. He writes (CV, 94; cf. PI, §285):

Soulful expression in music. It is not to be described in terms of degrees of loudness & of tempo. Any more than is a soulful facial expression describable in terms of the distribution of matter in space. Indeed it is not even to be explained by means of a paradigm, since the same piece can be played with genuine expression in innumerable ways.

This passage underscores the importance of game incorrigibility as the non-epistemic, non-cognitive measure of success for our knowledge of human beings. Reciprocating a soulful expression in music with genuine conviction means that we have attained a type of hinge certainty, which Moyal-Sharrock (2007) suggests calling “third-person objective psychological certainty.” Admitting imponderable evidence into such games means that we have dissociated the concept of “certainty” from the concept of “proof.” Imponderable evidence is not the basis of a proof for discerning a soulful expression, yet Wittgenstein’s important point is that the rules of evidence appropriate to empirical facts do not apply in our interpersonal relations. As “sufficient evidence passes over into insufficient without a borderline,” the incorrigible game leaves no room for the concept of “doubt,” hence also no room for discursive knowledge about matters of fact. A lack of proof is not a deficiency in the game. Furthermore, asking for absolute

epistemic certainty is a transgression.

The two main themes of my essay now intertwine. Wittgenstein's paradigm shift (as a philosopher of music) away from the autonomous work conception of music toward the open-endedness of musicking is in tandem with, and conducive to, his underscoring (as a philosopher of mind) of imponderable evidence as the ground floor of our knowledge of human beings. Musicking afforded Wittgenstein a familiar sense of the required sensitivity to the physiognomy of the human and a deeply felt sense of its importance to our form of life. As I have argued elsewhere (Guter 2017), his remarks on music reflect and emulate the spirit and subject-matter of Romantic thinking about music, but also respond to it critically, while at the same time they interweave into his forward thinking about the philosophic entanglements of language and the mind. Romantic thinkers conceived music in terms of an inexhaustible inner domain of human thoughts and feelings whose contents are not reducible, not collectible, incalculable, and hence can never be fully articulated. Understanding music amounts to gaining access to this otherwise inexpressible knowledge of humankind. Wittgenstein reoriented these metaphors of depth toward the indefinite, ornamental expanse of "the bustle of human life" (see *RPPII*, §§624–29). To use Lakoff and Johnson's (1980) terminology, Wittgenstein replaced the Romantic metaphor of human depth as "container" with that of a "journey." This is the thrust of his paradigm shift as a philosopher of music, in a nutshell. In this sense, musicking can be seen as a journey onto and into the "bustle of human life." As we genuinely strive toward the aesthetic apex of game incorrigibility we become more accomplished in our knowledge of human beings. We find one another as we music. And so, Wittgenstein (*CV*, 80) says, "understanding music is a manifestation of human life."

## References

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