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# Discussion

## Moods in the Music and the Man: A Response to Kivy and Carroll

### I. INTRODUCTION

An enduring question in the philosophy of music concerns how (or whether) music can convey emotion—can *sound* happy or sad. In this debate two competing strands of explanation have emerged. Arousal theories hold that music is emotion expressive—is sad or happy sounding—in virtue of arousing those emotions in the listener. Sad music makes us feel sad, and thus, we attribute this to the music. Formalist or contour theories argue that music (particularly instrumental or absolute music) cannot *arouse* emotions in us because music lacks the necessary representational content to do so.<sup>1</sup> Music is, however, emotion *expressive*. Music has certain formal properties that we perceive as expressive of sadness, in the same way that we might see the downward curves of a weeping willow or the face of a bloodhound as expressive of sadness. We perceive the sadness as an inherent property of the music itself. As Peter Kivy puts it, *contra* the arousalist view, the emotion is “in the music, not the man.”<sup>2</sup>

Noël Carroll has recently injected a new factor into this debate by arguing that it is *moods* that music engenders, not emotions.<sup>3</sup> Music causes us to experience certain moods, leading us to hear the music as sad or happy, or perhaps even anxious or patriotic. Carroll claims that by switching to talk about musical moods we can resolve the dispute between formalists and arousal theorists. Because moods are not representational states and do not require intentional objects, the formalist argument that music lacks the representational content necessary for emotion is sidestepped. Formalists can nonetheless rest assured that music does not engender emotions, as they have long argued, while

arousalists can also be content that music does arouse affective states of some explanatorily satisfactory kind. Kivy’s recent reply to Carroll shows that the fight is not over, but has simply moved to an adjacent battlefield.<sup>4</sup> Kivy argues that, if listened to properly, music can no more engender moods than emotions. He agrees with Carroll that music can be mood expressive, but does not think that this requires the listener to feel the mood in question.

In this discussion, I critically examine Kivy’s arguments in light of some recent empirical work in the neurology and psychology of music perception. I argue, in support of Carroll, that music can induce moods, although I offer a small correction to his account of how it does this. I also argue that the notion of formalist canonical listening that Kivy employs in his argument is problematic, both as an argument against Carroll’s position and as a claim about how we ought to listen to music. Insisting on formalist listening as the way that music is “supposed to be listened to in its status as a *fine art*” may beg the question against the arousalist both philosophically and neurologically.<sup>5</sup>

### II. CARROLL’S ARGUMENT

Carroll argues that by employing the explanatory framework of mood instead of emotion, we can avoid several of the difficulties that have arisen in the debate over emotions and music. Many of these difficulties were spawned by the assumption of a particular conception of what emotions are: the cognitive theory of emotions. According to this theory, emotions are, or necessarily require, cognitive evaluative states focused on an emotion object. Emotions, on this view, are intentional states: emotions are always about or directed toward particular events, persons, or things. To be angry, for example, is to believe that someone has offended

you or someone you care about. To be afraid is to evaluate something as being dangerous or threatening. These evaluations may be accompanied by characteristic bodily responses and feelings, but the cognitive states identify and individuate the emotions. If this is what emotions are, the formalists have argued, then music cannot in and of itself give rise to emotions. Music lacks the “logical machinery” to do so.<sup>6</sup> It can neither serve as an appropriate emotion object (it presents no threat or affront, for example) nor induce the necessary cognitions in the listener.

Moods, however, are objectless affective states. They are not about or directed toward anything in particular. Instead, they pervade our thoughts and behavior, coloring our perceptions and interactions in sometimes subtle, but global, ways. Moods do not require particular sorts of thoughts or appraisals; they influence *how* we think, not what in particular we think about. Therefore, moods are identified with global biases or modulations in cognitive processing, not with specific cognitive states.<sup>7</sup> Sad moods bias us to recollect negative memories or concepts, be more introverted, and prompt us to make judgments and decisions more slowly and carefully. Happy moods bias us toward positive memories and concepts and encourage us to take in information quickly, make less deliberate decisions, and interact with the world. Moods not only bias cognition, they include characteristic somatic changes. Sadness is accompanied by a lack of energy, a slumping of the shoulders, and downcast expressions. Happiness, in contrast, is associated with a more upright carriage, a tendency to look up and out, and a feeling of energy and enthusiasm.

Carroll argues that the distinctive properties of moods better capture the affective dimensions of musical experience than emotions. Many of the arguments against musical emotions simply do not apply to moods. Moods require a different sort of logical machinery than emotions—a sort that music can (at least *prima facie*) provide. Carroll suggests two plausible mechanisms for how music might give rise to moods. The first is that music engenders emotions, which can then dissipate into moods. I will not say much about this hypothesis; because Kivy and other formalists deny that music can arouse emotions, this suggestion does not have much traction with them.

Carroll’s second hypothesis is more interesting. Carroll suggests that we hear music as conveying

movement.<sup>8</sup> Carroll adds that this perception of movement also compels us to move with the music. This “inner impulse to move” provides the “affectively charged sensations in our bodies” or feeling states associated with mood.<sup>9</sup> Carroll goes on to suggest that

the bodily feelings, both somatic and phenomenological, stirred by the impression of movement in instrumental music, not only inspires certain ranges of overt movement, but also cognitive biases, notably a tendency to *imagine*, imagistically or otherwise, or to recollect, or to attend to the kinds of movement, and perhaps associated activities and habits of mind, suggested viscerally by the movement in the music.<sup>10</sup>

In this way, Carroll argues, music can bring about both the bodily feelings and cognitive biases associated with moods. Carroll concludes that a recasting of the discussion over musical emotions in terms of moods “gives the formalist his point, while also acknowledging the opposing faction’s estimation of the importance of the affective side of music.”<sup>11</sup>

### III. KIVY’S “AVENGING SKEPTICISM”

Kivy draws from the formalist arsenal to present several persuasive arguments against Carroll’s arousalist position. He begins by laying out what he calls the “rules of engagement”—“the conditions that . . . a successful account of how absolute music might arouse moods in listeners must satisfy.”<sup>12</sup> As these serve as an outline of his critique, as well as my response, I briefly enumerate them here:

1. “There should be convincing evidence adduced that absolute music does indeed engender moods in listeners before we are offered an explanation for *how* absolute music might do it.”
2. “The explanation, obviously, must be a plausible one.”
3. “The explanation must be one for how absolute music engenders moods in musical listeners in . . . the *canonical cases*: . . . the cases in which people are listening to music the way it is supposed to be listened to in its status *as a fine art*.”
4. “[T]he moods the theory is concerned with must be moods relevant to our appreciation and

enjoyment of absolute music as *music*; that is, as *art*.<sup>13</sup>

Kivy addresses the first rule by expressing a general skepticism about the existence of relevant empirical evidence: “the prima facie evidence for absolute music’s actually arousing or engendering moods in musical listeners, that evidence seems to me, at best, very thin.”<sup>14</sup> He then goes on to argue that Carroll’s explanations for *how* music arouses mood are implausible. Again, I focus on his argument against Carroll’s second hypothesis because it is well established that Kivy and other formalists reject the idea that music can engender emotions.

For music to induce or alter mood, the music must induce both the relevant somatic states and the cognitive biases that are constitutive of the mood. Kivy is actually sympathetic to Carroll’s suggestion that absolute music is expressive of movement, but not to the idea that this induces the listener to move, giving rise to certain bodily states and feelings. “I think the best we can say is that motion words seem appropriate descriptions of music in some figurative, attenuated sense.”<sup>15</sup> This casts doubt on the plausibility of Carroll’s proposed mechanism.

Kivy is even more critical of the “next step” that Carroll envisions: that the conscious experience of these feelings will encourage the listener “to imagine how someone or something would move to the music.” His criticism is based on what he holds are “canonical listening practices” for formalists—practices that Carroll’s hypothesis must comport with if it is to truly “negotiate a truce” between formalists and arousalists. Formalist listening practices require that one attend only to the formal, structural properties of the music and not allow the intrusion of personal associations, imaginings, or recollections. Kivy objects that if imagining, recollecting, and making associations are required to induce mood on Carroll’s account, then cases in which music does induce mood are not “canonical cases” of musical listening and violate the third rule of engagement.<sup>16</sup>

Kivy goes on to argue that “the moods that, on Carroll’s view, absolute music engenders, are engendered by means of features, the listener’s images, that are not part of the music, *qua* music, or *qua* art; and so the moods themselves, that these images help to engender, are not artistically, musically relevant to the formalist’s listening experience.”<sup>17</sup> Thus, the fourth rule of engagement is

broken, leaving Kivy to conclude that although music may (sometimes) be mood expressive, it cannot, “in the canonical formalist setting,” arouse the “garden-variety moods” any more than it can the garden-variety emotions.

#### IV. EVIDENCE TO THE CONTRARY

Although there is much we do not know about how the brain processes music, recent empirical work in both psychology and neuroscience does shed some light on the debate between arousalists and formalists. Empirical evidence cannot decide most philosophical debates, but several of the claims made by Carroll and Kivy are empirical claims or conjectures and thus should be held accountable to the evidence.

I begin by challenging Kivy’s claim that there is little evidence that absolute music can arouse moods. Not only is there ample evidence in the psychological literature that music can arouse moods, there is evidence that, to use Kivy’s words, “somber music can engender a somber mood in virtue of its being *somber*, upbeat music an upbeat mood in virtue of its being *upbeat*, and so on.”<sup>18</sup> In fact, music (including absolute music) is regarded as one of the most effective mood-induction procedures in the experimental literature.<sup>19</sup> It is particularly effective because it can arouse the necessary mood (the particular mood that the experimenter wants to induce in the subject) covertly—without the subject knowing that the experimenter wants to put him or her in that mood, and it does so without priming any particular thoughts or concepts that might confound the experimental outcome. There are ample studies that demonstrate that music induces both the somatic changes and cognitive changes constitutive of mood.<sup>20</sup> In short, Kivy’s concern about a lack of evidence is simply not supported by either the empirical data or standard practices of mood induction in the cognitive psychology literature. The first rule of engagement has, therefore, been met.

There is also empirical support for some of Carroll’s conjectures about how music might induce changes in mood. For brevity’s sake, I focus on the evidence relevant to my arguments. A recent article by Jamshed Bharucha, Meagan Curtis, and Kaivon Paroo reviews much of this literature and argues that music processing involves a number of different brain systems.<sup>21</sup> One of these

processes musical structure (what they refer to as “intrinsic” features of the music) and generates “formal eliciting codes”—nonconceptual representations that are syntactic, implicit, and modular (automatic, informationally encapsulated, and cognitively impenetrable). These formal eliciting codes are also automatically mapped onto “extrinsic” domains of both affective and motion processing. This provides support not only for the claim that we hear music as communicating affective information, but also that we hear it as communicating information about motion.

More importantly for Carroll’s case, Bharucha et al argue that processing in these domains involves covert bodily changes, most likely including subconscious mimicry or simulation of the motion and physiological aspects of the affective states being perceived in the music. These may include subliminal facial and vocal expressions, changes in heart rate, respiration, blood pressure, and subtle changes in motor activity and posture.<sup>22</sup> Information about motion, including subliminal changes in facial expression, likely feed back into the affect system, creating further affective somatic changes. In other words, music automatically induces certain physiological changes in the listener consistent with affective arousal. Of particular interest to the formalist is that these changes are linked to specific structural properties of the music such as pitch, mode, and tempo, not simply to idiosyncratic personal associations and memories, and are found to be consistent across individuals.<sup>23</sup> These findings lend support to Carroll’s claim that music creates an urge to move in the listener and that this causes physiological and phenomenological changes consistent with mood states.

Work on mood suggests, however, that Carroll’s hypothesis about mood-induction mechanisms is unnecessarily complicated. The cognitive biases associated with mood arise subconsciously as a result of processing in the affective domain;<sup>24</sup> they do not require the top-down intervention of cognitive states such as imagining or recollecting, or the conscious recognition of a feeling.<sup>25</sup> Although persistent rumination over negative memories, or sustained imagining of slumped and down-cast individuals shuffling along at a funereal pace can influence mood, such explicit and conscious procedures are not necessary. Both the cognitive biases and somatic changes can be brought about automatically as a result of aspects of musical structure being processed by the affective and motion pro-

cessing systems. In short, manifesting the bodily aspects of mood can induce the relevant cognitive biases, resulting in a “full-blown”—but perhaps subtle—shift in mood.

If we revise Carroll’s suggestion along these lines, then not only is Carroll’s suggestion plausible, Kivy’s last points lose their bite. Music *can* induce moods without the listener imagining, recollecting, or otherwise engaging in “the kind of ‘mind wandering’ that, according to the formalist account, is destructive of his canonical listening mode.”<sup>26</sup> Furthermore, it can do so in virtue of the intrinsic formal properties of the music itself, by features that are “part of the music, *qua* music.”<sup>27</sup> This makes it difficult for Kivy to maintain that these moods are not relevant to the formalist’s listening experience.

#### V. THE EXPERIENCE OF CANONICAL LISTENING

Kivy could protest that even if music *can* induce moods the moods do not—or should not—contribute to our appreciation of the music *qua* music. He could once again invoke the notion of canonical listening practices to argue that allowing one’s affective state to inform the listening experience is a sort of nonformalist “mind wandering”; however such a response would clearly beg the question against the arousalist. Formalist canonical listening practices cannot be cashed out in a way that, by definition, precludes the listener from attending to his or her affective states. Likewise, evidence of affective arousal cannot in and of itself mean that formalist listening practices have been violated. This would clearly make it impossible to forge a truce between arousalists and formalists.

Insisting on formalist listening practices may also *neurologically* beg the question against the arousalist by influencing the listener’s experience of the music. As described above, Bharucha et al argue that our understanding of music depends on information from three domains: musical structure, affect, and motion, even though much of this processing remains implicit or nonconscious. Our conscious *experience* of music arises as a result of the play of attention over the aspects of this processing that are available to consciousness. The focus of attention is always changing, affected by both endogenous and exogenous cues. This can make for different listening experiences for different listeners. If a listener attends more to musical

structure than affect (and within this attends to harmonics more than melody), his or her experience of the music is subtly different than that of someone who is more attentive to how the music registers affectively.<sup>28</sup> However, because information about musical structure maps automatically to affect and motion domains, and all of this contributes in complex ways to how we experience music, there is little ground for insisting on attention to formal musical properties and nothing else. Indeed, it may be impossible to experientially separate out musical structure from affect or affect perceived from affect experienced.

Engaging in formalist listening practices may result in a musical experience that is influenced by music-induced mood, but is dominated by conscious attention to aspects of musical structure. Perhaps this explains why Kivy insists that the emotions or moods expressed in music are cognized, not felt, whereas Carroll is convinced that music has the power to move us affectively; they are simply hearing—and feeling—different things.<sup>29</sup>

## VI. CONCLUSION

I believe I have met Kivy's rules of engagement in defending the claim that music can arouse moods and that this is a plausible hypothesis for how and why we hear music as affect expressive. There is considerable evidence that absolute music can in fact induce moods. Too, at least one of the mechanisms that Carroll suggests for how music might do this is, with some modification, plausible. Finally, there are no convincing grounds for thinking that individuals who are listening in this manner are failing to listen to the music "in the way it is supposed to be listened to in its status as a *fine art*" or that the resulting moods are not "relevant to our appreciation and enjoyment of absolute music as *music*; that is, as *art*." The difference between formalists and arousalists may come down to little more than subtle differences in which facets of the music they are interested in, and that may reflect something about the listener as much as the music itself.

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1. Hereafter, I use 'music' to refer to instrumental or absolute music, as it is purely instrumental music that most clearly raises the issues.

2. Peter Kivy, "Mood and Music: Some Reflections for Noël Carroll," *The Journal of Aesthetics and Art Criticism* 64 (2006): 271–281; see p. 275.

3. Noël Carroll, "Art and Mood: Preliminary Notes and Conjectures," *Monist* 86 (2003): 521–555. Carroll argues for the role of mood in many forms of art, not just music, but because music remains the most contentious art form in this debate, I restrict myself to that case. Others have also argued that music engenders moods, not (or in addition to) emotions, including Colin Radford, "Muddy Waters," *The Journal of Aesthetics and Art Criticism* 49 (1991): 247–252; and Jenefer Robinson, *Deeper Than Reason: Emotion and its Role in Literature, Music and Art* (Oxford University Press, 2005).

4. Kivy, "Mood and Music."

5. Kivy, "Mood and Music," p. 275.

6. Carroll, "Art and Mood," p. 551.

7. See Laura Sizer, "Towards a Computational Theory of Mood," *The British Journal of the Philosophy of Science* 51 (2000): 743–769, for a more thorough description and argument for this conception of moods.

8. As have others, including Peter Kivy. See for example, his *Introduction to a Philosophy of Music* (Clarendon Press, 2002).

9. Carroll, "Art and Mood," p. 548.

10. Carroll, "Art and Mood," p. 549.

11. Carroll, "Art and Mood," p. 551.

12. Kivy, "Mood and Music," p. 275.

13. *Ibid.*

14. *Ibid.*

15. Kivy, "Mood and Music," p. 279.

16. Kivy, "Mood and Music," p. 278.

17. *Ibid.*

18. Kivy, "Mood and Music," p. 276.

19. Michael F. Pignatiello, Cameron J. Camp, and Lee Anna Rasar, "Musical Mood Induction: An Alternative to the Velten Technique," *Journal of Abnormal Psychology* 95 (1986): 295–297; Jaak Panksepp and Gunther Bernatzky, "Emotional sounds and the brain: the neuro-affective foundations of musical appreciation," *Behavioural Processes* 60 (2002): 133–155; Jamshed J. Bharucha, Meagan Curtis, and Kaivon Paroo, "Varieties of Musical Experience," *Cognition* 100 (2006): 131–172.

20. For studies on the somatic changes, see Dale Bartlett, "Physiological Responses to Music and Sound Stimuli," in *Handbook of Music Psychology* (San Antonio: IMR Press, 1996); Carol L. Krumhansl, "An Exploratory Study of Musical Emotions and Psychophysiology," *Canadian Journal of Experimental Psychology* 51 (1997): 336–352; and Isabelle Peretz, "Listen to the brain: a biological perspective on musical emotions," in *Music and Emotion: Theory and Research*, ed. P. Juslin and J. Sloboda (Oxford University Press, 2001). For those on the cognitive

studies, see P. Niedenthal and M. B. Setterlund, "Emotion Congruence in Perception," *Personality and Social Psychology Bulletin* 20 (1994): 401–411; K. Scherer and M. Zentner, "Emotional effects of music: Production rules" in *Music and Emotion*; and J. Sloboda and P. Juslin, "Psychological Perspectives on Music and Emotion," in *Music and Emotion*.

21. Jamshed Bharucha, Meagan Curtis, and Kaivon Paroo, "Varieties of Musical Experience."

22. Bartlett, "Physiological responses to music and sound stimuli."

23. See also Isabelle Peretz, "Listen to the Brain" and Sloboda and Juslin, "Psychological Perspectives on Music and Emotion," for reviews of similar evidence.

24. P. Niedenthal and M. B. Setterlund, "Emotion Congruence in Perception"; K. Scherer and M. Zentner, "Emotional effects of music: production rules."

25. Indeed, what we would recognize as the feeling of a mood is likely to include the overall feeling of what it is like to be in that mood, including what it is like to be thinking in that moody way. See Laura Sizer, "What Feelings Can't Do," *Mind and Language* 20 (2006): 108–135, for a discussion of the relationship between feelings and moods.

26. Kivy, "Mood and Music," p. 278.

27. *Ibid.*

28. See J. Panksepp and G. Bernatzky, "Emotional Sounds and the Brain" for a similar point.

29. Kivy puts it in these terms with respect to emotions in his *Introduction to a Philosophy of Music*, p.109.

## Moodology: A Response to Laura Sizer

### I. ENHANCED FORMALISM

In responding to Laura Sizer's challenging suggestions about mood and music, it is vital that the view I am defending be *clearly* and *precisely* stated. For I think that a good deal of what she says may well be completely consistent with it and some of what she says completely irrelevant to it. Thus, here, as clearly and precisely and *briefly* as I can put it, is my view, at least that part of it relevant to present concerns.

1. I believe "that there may be more than one *canonical* way of listening to absolute music."<sup>1</sup>
2. The *only* one of the canonical ways of listening to absolute music that I am concerned with in these remarks is that way that I describe as the way of "enhanced formalism."
3. According to the enhanced formalist, among the various structural and phenomenological properties it possesses, absolute music possesses expressive properties that are perceived *in the music*.

4. The expressive properties of absolute music are what I call the garden-variety emotions, such as anger, sadness, or happiness, and what I shall call, for present purposes, the garden-variety moods, such as depression or anxiety. (I am not always clear in individual cases whether something is a mood or an emotion, but I don't think that will matter for the issue at hand.)
5. The subscriber to enhanced formalism maintains that when one listens to absolute music in the enhanced formalist way, which is to say, concentrating as best he can on the structural, phenomenological, and expressive properties *of the music*, the expressive properties of the music do not arouse in him the garden-variety emotions or moods the music is expressive of.
6. The enhanced formalist's canonical settings for the experience of absolute music are the concert hall and the various places where he can listen, undisturbed, to recorded music in the enhanced formalist manner.
7. Absolute music, the enhanced formalist claims, is frequently *deeply moving*—arouses *deep emotion*—in listeners who listen in the enhanced formalist manner, when the music is of the high artistic quality exemplified by the masterpieces of the Western canon.
8. The enhanced formalist's claims apply only to the absolute music of the Western canon, not to any other kind of music, either of the West or of any other culture.

With this (necessarily) brief account of enhanced formalism on the table, I can now turn to Sizer's challenges, which are directed at proposition 5 but which cannot be evaluated without reference to the other propositions which make up the enhanced formalist's credo.

### II. PSYCHOLOGISTS HAVE SHOWN THAT . . .

Let me begin by stating the obvious: Sizer bases her arguments entirely on the results of psychological experiments. She adduces what she takes to have been *shown* by various psychological experiments on music and the emotions, and goes on to claim what has been *shown* by these experiments shows, *ipso facto*, that the enhanced formalist's views on this matter of music and the emotions—which is to say, *my* views—are mistaken. But, alas, dealing with Sizer's claims is like grappling with

phantoms. For although she gives full bibliographical information in her notes, she gives none of the designs or results of the experiments she alludes to in her discussion, so the reader must simply take her word for it that the results of these experiments *show* what *she* says they show, or go to the printed sources, which, clearly, I have not the time to do, given the necessary constraints on allowable time for writing such a reply.

But, it may be objected, where do *you* get off, a nonscientist, doubting what a scientist tells you a scientific experiment *shows*? What kind of arrogance is *that*? Well, of course, if the scientist were a molecular biologist or an astrophysicist, I would not dream of questioning what she told me her experiment or observation *showed*, or ask to see the data, which, needless to say, I wouldn't understand if I saw it. But as all of us in philosophy have learned, psychological experiments relevant to our particular projects seldom, if ever, produce results that are unambiguous: that *show* one philosophical thesis is right and the opposing one wrong, nor are the results or experimental designs beyond the capabilities of the intelligent lay person to understand and interpret. If, for example, one takes a look at Alvin Goldman's *Simulating Minds*, he or she will find results of experiment upon experiment interpreted by some as showing that simulation theory is wrong, and reinterpreted by Goldman as being perfectly consistent with it.<sup>2</sup> Or, more to the present point, in my discussion of Jenefer Robinson's book, *Deeper than Reason*, in *The British Journal of Aesthetics*, I argued that the results of two highly touted experiments on the musical emotions, adduced as conclusive evidence against enhanced formalism, were actually quite compatible with it.<sup>3</sup>

I hasten to add that I am not trashing the psychologists' recent experiments on the musical experience. What I am urging—and urging *strongly*—is that we cannot just accept uncritically what a psychologist says that she or he or some other psychologist has *shown*. We must look *critically* at the design and results of these experiments, and evaluate for *ourselves*, in the light of our own philosophical positions, what these experiments really do *show*, if anything.

With these cautionary remarks in mind, then, and in the absence of just those experimental results that I would need to make a thorough and proper response to Sizer, I will now go on to do the best I can, which is to make some general com-

ments on her claims of *what psychologists have shown*.

i. Sizer says that

music (including absolute music) is regarded as one of the most effective mood-induction procedures in the experimental literature. It is particularly effective because it can arouse the necessary mood (the particular mood that the experimenter wants to induce in the subject) covertly—without the subject knowing that the experimenter wants to put him or her in that mood, and does so without priming any particular thoughts or concepts that might confound the experimental outcome. (p. 309)

The experiments, then, that Sizer adduces, in the previously quoted passage, are not specifically designed to test the hypothesis that absolute music arouses moods, in the formalist musical listener, but are experiments in which absolute music is “used” to arouse moods in subjects for other experimental purposes. The pressing questions, for the philosopher of art, are what the listening conditions were under which the listening took place, and, something that musical experimenters never seem to report on, in my experience, anyway, what went through the listeners' heads while they listened. Were they more or less “enhanced formalist” listeners, or were they the kinds of listeners who hear narratives, personae, or “pictures” in the music, as many listeners do? All of these questions must be answered before we know whether these experimental results *show* that proposition 5 of the enhanced formalist's credo is false. The psychologists refer to their listeners as “subjects.” Mine is a philosophy about more or less informed, devoted music lovers. Were these subjects music lovers, seriously listening to musical works as great artworks, in these experiments? Sizer does not tell us.

To make clearer what I am driving at here, I call the reader's attention to an essay of mine published some years ago in which I allowed it was perfectly consistent with my views, and perhaps true, that sad music may have a “tendency” to arouse sadness in listeners, and likewise for the other garden-variety emotions.<sup>4</sup> And I am perfectly willing to extend this conjecture to garden-variety moods as well. But a “tendency” to effect X is governed by “conditions.” For example, my car may have a tendency to swerve to the left when driven over eighty-five miles per hour; but because

I never drive at that speed, that tendency will never be realized. Thus, a passage of gloomy music may have a tendency to make one gloomy, and that tendency may be realized under certain experimental conditions designed to induce gloom in subjects. The question is whether, if it *does* have a tendency to produce gloom, that tendency is effective in the circumstances in which serious music lovers listen to music, and for the reasons that they do.

Sizer writes that the mood-inducing experimenter produces his effect “without priming any particular thoughts or concepts that might confound the experimental outcome” (p. 309). I find this somewhat bizarre if it is supposed to be evidence that serious listeners to the classical music repertoire have moods evoked by the objects of their attention. For, of course, *they are fully primed with thoughts and concepts* relevant to the experience of great works of the musical art they are experiencing, “that might confound the experimental outcome,” which is to say, suppress the arousal of moods in the presence of far more interesting and compelling features of Western art music. It is *those* listeners and *their* listening that we want to know about. What we want to know is whether those listeners, when they are seriously listening to music *as art*, become moody. I don’t think psychology has caught up with them yet. But in my own case, I find so much in Beethoven’s *Eroica* to fascinate and engross me, that gloom is the last mood I think the music would engender in me, even in the “gloomy” parts. The mood it engenders is an upbeat, ecstatic, exalted mood. (See proposition 7 of the enhanced formalist’s credo.) In any case, psychology, in my experience, has not caught up yet with the listener I am concerned with in my philosophy.

ii. Sizer writes that “music automatically induces certain physiological changes in the listener consistent with affective arousal” (p. 310).

I am not sure what force the word ‘consistent’ has here, but what it suggests to me can be illustrated with an instance. I went to a neurologist complaining of pains in my legs. He suspected a pinched nerve and sent me for a CAT scan. When the results came in, I went back for a consultation. “Well,” I asked, “what’s the verdict?” The reply was this: “The results are consistent with a pinched nerve.” To which I responded, “What can I do about my pinched nerve?” And the neurologist returned with, “I didn’t say you had a pinched

nerve. I said the results were consistent with you having a pinched nerve. They are also consistent with you *not* having a pinched nerve.” Obviously, what he hoped for was results *inconsistent* with my having a pinched nerve or results *inconsistent* with my *not* having a pinched nerve. In other words, the results were *inconclusive*. The moral of the story being that if the results Sizer adduces are, in the previous sense, consistent with the subjects being affectively aroused, they are also consistent with them *not* being affectively aroused. The results are inconclusive for or against the enhanced formalist.

But let us assume that the results Sizer adduces are not merely consistent with affective arousal but inconsistent with there *not* being affective arousal. So what’s the problem? This result of course is completely consistent with enhanced formalism. (See proposition 7 of the enhanced formalist’s credo.) *Of course* listening to music causes physiological changes in the subject. What human activity wouldn’t? *Of course* when a genuine music lover listens to the sublime sounds of the *Eroica* she is deeply moved by the experience, and she has, in the process, undergone “certain physiological changes . . . consistent with affective arousal.” She *is* affectively aroused.<sup>5</sup> What has to be shown, if the enhanced formalist is to be defeated by these kinds of results, is that the physiological changes that are “consistent with affective arousal” track the expressive properties of the music in such a way that the physiological changes taking place when the formalist listener listens to a gloomy passage are such that they are consistent only with, are the sufficient condition of gloom-arousal, and likewise for the other garden-variety moods.

iii. Both Carroll and Sizer make heavy weather of the claim that, as Sizer puts it, “music creates an urge to move in the listener and that this causes physiological changes consistent with mood states” (p. 310). Again, we have the problem here of what is meant by “consistent with.” But having pointed that problem out once, there is no need to belabor the point.

So I will take it that the claim of Carroll and Sizer is this: there is experimental evidence that music produces an urge to move, and this urge to move causes the listener to enter a certain mood state. Presumably, if the music is in a brisk tempo, the urge is to move briskly to it; if the music is in a slow tempo, the urge is to move slowly to it. Furthermore, because, it is claimed, moving



briskly puts you in a cheerful mood and moving slowly puts you in a gloomy mood, the *urge* to move briskly will also put you in a cheerful mood, and the *urge* to move slowly will also put you in a gloomy mood. Thus, it would seem to follow that listening to the opening measures of Beethoven's Fifth Symphony should put one in a cheerful mood, as it is in a brisk tempo, whereas the slow movement of Beethoven's *Pathétique* Sonata should put one in a gloomy mood, as it moves at a very slow pace.

But surely this is not the result Carroll and Sizer are looking for, nor is it *prima facie* plausible or consistent with my experience, anyway. They want the mood in the man to track the mood in the music. However, the first movement of the mighty Fifth, at least up to the entrance of the major theme, is dominated by gloom and doom, whereas the slow movement of the *Pathétique* is diffused with a sublime mood of tranquil sunshine and well-being, at least as I read it. There is a mismatch here between the mood in the music and the mood in the man that must be dealt with by any philosophy of music that includes the claim of Carroll and Sizer vis-à-vis the propensity of music to arouse moods through the urge to motion.

Carroll and Sizer might respond to the above observations that there are other mood parameters in the musical examples cited that, so to speak, defeat the urge-to-movement parameters. Sizer claims, for example, that recognizing the mood of a musical passage might cause in the listener "subliminal facial and vocal expressions"—these, presumably, causing the appropriate mood in the listener (p. 310). So, I suppose, the claim is that in listening to the first movement of the Fifth Symphony, I recognize the gloom and doom in the opening measures, this causes me to subliminally frown and groan, and *this* pushes me toward a gloomy mood. But, of course, the rapid tempo is producing in me the urge to move rapidly, and *that* is pushing toward a cheerful mood. The two, therefore, cancel each other out, and neither mood is aroused—all right with me but, again, an unwanted result from Carroll's and Sizer's viewpoint.

My own take on this, briefly, is that *of course* brisk music *tends* to give us the urge to move briskly, if that means the urge to tap our feet, or something like that, and *perhaps* this urge has a *tendency* to push us toward a cheerful mood; *maybe* recognizing the sadness in music has a *tendency* to make us frown, and the frowning a *ten-*

*dency* to push us toward gloom. But there is so much else, of far more importance, going on, and what I am listening for and concentrating when I listen in the formalist manner to Western art music in its proper settings, that these *tendencies* simply fail to have an effect; they are, as it were, cancelled out, rendered ineffective. (See *i* above.)

And let me just add that Sizer's claim about facial expression feedback is a contested claim, as is so much in this kind of psychological research. As well, it is my understanding that facial mimicry is in response to the perception of facial expressions in others. And it hardly follows from that that the recognition of sadness in music will have the same effect.

*iv.* Sizer writes:

Engaging in formalist listening may result in a musical experience that is influenced by music-induced mood, but is dominated by conscious attention to aspects of musical structure. Perhaps this explains why Kivy insists that emotions or moods expressed in music are cognized, not felt, whereas Carroll is convinced that music has the power to move us affectively; they are simply hearing—and feeling—different things.

And again: "The difference between formalists and arousalists may come down to little more than subtle differences in which facets of the music they are interested in, and that may reflect something about the listener as much as the music itself" (both p. 311).

Well *of course!* This is obviously the case. The mystery is why Sizer thinks this would be news to me or a novel suggestion to "solve" our problem. First, it was clear from my comments on Noël Carroll's article that the intentional object of my listening was different to his, as he hears mood-producing actions and events in the music and I only hear expressive structure. Furthermore, I devoted an entire book, *Music Alone*, to the thesis that the intentional object of musical listening varies with how the listener listens and what the listener knows about the music he or she is listening to. I have defended on numerous occasions the view that the intentional objects of musical listening are different for the enhanced formalist from what they are for other folks. (See the epigraph of *Music Alone*.) So if the issue turns merely on a different intentional object for arousalists from that of enhanced formalists, there is no issue.

v. Sizer avers that “it may be impossible to experientially separate out [a] musical structure from affect or [b] affect perceived from affect experienced” (p. 311).

Let us take (a) first. Does Sizer mean that when I hear a passage of gloomy music I cannot distinguish the expressive property of the passage from its other properties? This is preposterous. I can talk about the chromatic structure of a passage without any reference to the expressive property of gloom that the passage may possess.

Perhaps she means that when I hear the chromatic passage I cannot help but hear its expressive property of gloom, if it has that expressive property. Well that, of course, may be true. But what has it to do with the debate? As I said in *Music Alone*, the expressive property “comes with the territory.” The enhanced formalist insists that some—not all—music possesses expressive properties. And if it possesses them in the way, as I have suggested in various places, following Charles Hartshorne, the color yellow possesses the quality of cheerfulness, then you can’t hear the chromatic passage without hearing its gloominess. Nothing here that is true is contrary to enhanced formalism. On, then, to (b).

What could Sizer possibly mean by claiming that one cannot experientially separate out affect perceived from affect experienced? Does she mean that one cannot perceive the expressive property of gloom (say) in a musical passage without necessarily *feeling* gloomy as a result? But that is plainly false. I did not invent the view I call “enhanced formalism” out of thin air. I proposed it as an account of my own experience of music, which is that of perceiving the emotions and moods *in* the music while not thereby having those emotions and moods aroused *in me*. Gloomy music does not make me gloomy (unless it is bad, boring music). And thank God for that!

vi. Sizer warns me that “formalist canonical listening practices cannot be cashed out in a way that, by definition, precludes the listener from attending to his or her affective states. Likewise, evidence of affective arousal cannot in and of itself mean that formalist practices have been violated” (p. 310, emphasis added).

Now a practitioner of my experience hardly need be admonished against falling into a “conventionalist sulk.” *Of course* I have not made enhanced formalism true “by definition.” But we must be very careful here to get things right.

Enhanced formalism has, as part of its credo, that listening to music in the enhanced formalist manner does not result in the expressive properties that are perceived in the music arousing the garden-variety emotions and moods they are expressive of. And I argued in my critique of Noël Carroll’s article on moods in the arts that the way he proposed for absolute music to arouse moods, namely, by hearing actions, events, and images in the music, was (a) not formalist listening (for obvious reasons) and (b) not a canonical way of listening because listeners, in this way of listening, are projecting something into the music that is not there—that was not intended to be there by the composers of this kind of music.

According to Sizer, as I understand her, *psychology has shown that* some subjects listen to music formalistically, which is to say, attending only to the pure musical parameters (including the expressive ones), not hearing actions or events or images or narratives in the music, and having moods aroused in them that the music is expressive of; as well, *psychology has shown that* this is a canonical way of listening to absolute music, and so the enhanced formalist credo is mistaken in this regard. I have a number of points to make about this.

First, as I explained previously, I am simply not convinced that psychology has shown all of the things Sizer has claimed it to have *shown* and would need to go over all of the results myself to form an educated opinion. So, *a fortiori*, I am not convinced that psychology has shown formalist listening can produce moods in listeners absolute music is expressive of—at least the kind of music I am talking about and the kind of listening it elicits from the kind of listener I am talking about.

Second, let us suppose, for the sake of argument, that psychology *has* shown that some subjects do indeed listen to absolute music formalistically *and* have the appropriate moods aroused in them. What it cannot *show* is that this way is *canonical*, simply because canonicity is a *normative* concept. Psychology can show how people experience absolute music, but it cannot show how they *should* experience it, which is just a special case of the obvious generalization that human psychology is a value-free, descriptive, and (one hopes) explanatory discipline, not a normative one. In order to determine whether the above formalist listening, which I will call arousalist formalist listening, is canonical, one must not only

have a psychology of music, one must also have a philosophy of art and, as part of it, a philosophy of music, into which the psychologist's results are seen to fit.

Finally, let us again for the sake of argument agree that arousalist formalism is a canonical listening stance for absolute music. We must *still* distinguish, in any canonical mode of listening, *correct* from *incorrect* instances of it. An example will help.

Part of the repertory of listening strategies, in formalist listening of either the enhanced or the arousalist kind, is the one in which attention is concentrated on the highest, melodic line, secondarily on the bass, with the harmonic structure in between as, so to say, in the background. That strategy would be just the right one (say) for listening to one of Bach's sonatas for violin and figured bass. But although *canonical*, it would be just the *wrong* strategy for listening to one of Bach's sonatas for violin and obbligato cembalo. For there, of course, one must give *equal* attention to the high voice in the violin, the low voice in the bass, *and* the middle voice in the harpsichordist's right hand. There is *no* background or secondary object of attention—which is doubtless why much of Bach is a problem for many listeners.

The reason I bring this up is that part of Sizer's description of what I dubbed arousalist formalism characterizes the listener as "*attending* to his or her *affective states*."<sup>6</sup> And *if* arousalist formalism is *canonical*, I am inclined to say that *attending to* one's affective states, with the emphasis on *attending to*, rather than keeping them well in the background, is going to be very damaging to good formalist listening habits, and in most cases, where the Western absolute music canon is concerned, *canonical* but not *correct*—more suited to the music of Lawrence Welk or Liberace than to the masterpieces of Western art music. (But that is matter for another occasion.)

There are many, *many* more points in Sizer's provocative discussion that I would like very much to discuss. But the editor of this journal has, quite rightly, put a muzzle on me, and I have, I fear, already had more barks than I was entitled to. So I will make an end with one last, general growl.

### III. THE DISCONNECT

Whenever I read an account of an experiment in the psychology of music, the question that invari-

ably leaps to mind is this: "Are we talking about *the same thing*?" Here is what I am talking about.

Arthur C. Danto once described Rembrandt's *Polish Rider* as "one of the deepest paintings of one of the deepest artists in the history of the subject, a painting through which a person might define his life."<sup>7</sup> It is *that* experience that I am trying to talk about and make sense of in my "philosophy of music." And it seems to me the musical experiences the psychologists are monitoring are so far from mine, and from Danto's experience of the *Polish Rider*, that the answer to my question is this: "No. The psychologists are talking and thinking about one thing and I another."

Indeed, Sizer should have suspected as much herself. For you will recall her suggestion that Carroll and I, in listening to music, "are simply hearing—and feeling—different things." But, a fortiori, listeners to snatches of music in psychological laboratories "are simply hearing—and feeling—different things" from the things heard and felt (and *thought about*) by an audience of sophisticated and devoted listeners to a Beethoven symphony or Mozart piano concerto in Carnegie Hall.

The works of absolute music in the Western canon are held in deep reverence by their devotees as art works of the highest order. These listeners come to the concert hall with varying degrees of musical knowledge of these works, ranging from mere familiarity and vague historical awareness, to technical musical training and a detailed historical perspective. But they all come to the concert hall intending to listen with rapt attention, both to the works themselves, and to the manner in which they are performed, and expect from this attentive listening a deep and rewarding experience, like the kind they get from Shakespeare or Rembrandt. The works are *objects of cognition*, not merely physical stimuli. Lovers of music, of the kind I am describing, do not hear music—they *listen* to it and *think* about it. It is the experiences of these listeners that I have tried to understand and explicate in my philosophy. And until the psychologists hook up their electrodes and brain scans to *these* listeners, in *their* musical habitat, I will remain skeptical about *what psychology has shown* about the artistic experience of absolute music in the Western canon. "Only connect . . ." is the operative principle here as elsewhere. For it is what goes on in Symphony Hall, not Psychology Hall, that concerns me.

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1. Peter Kivy, "Mood and Music: Some Reflections for Noël Carroll," *The Journal of Aesthetics and Art Criticism* 64 (2006): 271–281; quote from p. 278, emphasis added.

2. See Alvin I. Goldman, *Simulating Minds: The Philosophy, Psychology, and Neuroscience of Mindreading* (Oxford University Press, 2006).

3. See Peter Kivy, "Critical Study: Deeper than Emotion," *The British Journal of Aesthetics* 46 (2006): 304–310. Jenefer Robinson, *Deeper than Reason: Emotion and Its Role in Music, Literature, and Art* (Oxford University Press, 2005).

4. See Peter Kivy, "Auditors' Emotions: Contention, Concession, and Compromise," *The Journal of Aesthetics and Art Criticism* 51 (1993); reprinted in Kivy, *New Essays on Musical Understanding* (Oxford University Press, 2001), chapter 5.

5. For my views on the emotive power of music, see Peter Kivy, "How Music Moves," in *What is Music? An Introduction to the Philosophy of Music*, ed. Philip Alperson (Penn State University Press, 1994), reprinted in Peter Kivy, *Music Alone: Philosophical Reflections on the Purely Musical Experience* (Cornell University Press, 1990), Chapter 8.

6. Emphasis added.

7. Arthur C. Danto, *The Transfiguration of the Commonplace: A Philosophy of Art* (Harvard University Press, 1981), p. 31.

## Not Reconciled: Comments for Peter Kivy

### I. INTRODUCTION

In "Art and Mood: Preliminary Notes and Conjectures," several things were attempted, including, primarily, characterizations of several of the relationships between the affective states that we call moods and the arts.<sup>1</sup> Along the way, in the penultimate section, special attention was paid to the relationship of mood to absolute or pure instrumental music because, since at least the time of Eduard Hanslick, there has been recurring skepticism about the purchase that such music can have on the affective states of listeners.

This skepticism is one of the central tenets of what has come to be called musical formalism. Musical formalists stand opposed to plain listeners (and even to many professional musicians and psychologists of music), who generally appear to

presume that there is no problem in reporting that a piece of orchestral music raises, for example, tender feelings in them. "Art and Mood" proposed a compromise between the formalists and the rest, namely, to the effect that formalists are correct in maintaining that absolute music does not evoke certain kinds of affects, such as cognitively incited emotions, but that the rest of us are right in maintaining that there is a connection between pure instrumental music and certain dimensions of affective experience, notably moods. That compromise, however, has been spurned by Peter Kivy, the leading musical formalist of the moment.<sup>2</sup>

Although it may prove impossible to negotiate a truce with the formalists on their own terms, we believe that the views concerning music and affect advanced in "Art and Mood" can be defended against Kivy's objections in the court of third parties. And that is the purpose of this essay.

But before engaging Kivy's charges head on, we would like to draw attention to a difference between how we conceive of the philosophy of music versus the way in which Kivy appears to approach it. For us, the task of the philosophy of music is in large measure an effort to rationally reconstruct the practice of music—to make sense out of the ways in which practitioners, creators, and listeners alike understand that practice and articulate their understanding of it. On our view, it is not up to the philosopher of music to legislate for the practice by, for example, declaring portions of it inadmissible because of its ostensible absurdity as shown by some a priori theory, such as an a priori theory of the emotions. Nor do we think that facts about human psychology can be adjudicated by armchair reasoning from first principles.

### II. EVIDENCE AND EXPLANATION

Kivy's first line of objection to the hypothesis that music might engender moods is to contend that there is no evidence for the view.<sup>3</sup> In response to the observation that the talk about the connection between music and moods is rife in our culture and others, Kivy's retort is that people don't know what they are talking about. People will tell you that colds result from getting wet. But they're wrong. How folks talk about such matters has little authority for Kivy.

Recent psychological research indicates, however, that there is evidence that music does

causally stimulate the human affective system. Employing magnetic resonance imaging machinery, scientists have observed the brain activity of subjects exposed to classical music and have noted that the sonic stimulus occasioned neural responses in sites in the brain connected with emotion and reward; particularly interesting, from our perspective, is that the cerebellum, a region linked to physical movement, reacted to the musical input.<sup>4</sup>

Kivy contends that the fact that people believe that music causes moods is not enough to show that it actually does so: people believe many things, such as astrology. But there are scientific studies that measure brain activity and the responses of the autonomic nervous system while observing physical behavior (and verbal responses) which find that music brings about physiological changes characteristic of moods.<sup>5</sup> If people's beliefs in the power of music to inspire mood is truly analogous to a belief in astrology, then, oddly enough, this would be a case where the astronomers concur with the simple folks.

One study, which does rely on self-reporting, indicates that people are less confused about where the relevant affect resides—in the music or themselves—than Kivy maintains.<sup>6</sup> Rather than believing that they are experiencing the expressive characteristic of the expressive properties in the music when really they are only detecting said properties, listeners have been shown to be able to distinguish between the expressive properties of the music and the emotions they feel; to a significant degree, subjects report finding properties in the music that are not thought to be experienced as emotions, unlike what might be expected were Kivy right about the confusion he attributes to listeners.<sup>7</sup>

In “Art and Mood,” it was suggested that the affective biasing we call mood may be brought on line by the feelings of movement elicited by music. As already indicated, recent brain science confirms that neural movement centers are activated by music, thereby supplying some empirical evidence for our conjecture. Needless to say, this is not conclusive proof. But it does show that there may be scientific evidence that shows that ordinary folks are not utterly benighted when they talk about the music and its relationship to their affective life. Just as some folk remedies have been shown to have a scientific basis, there is now enough scientific evidence being gathered to sug-

gest that it is, at this stage, imprudent to disparage as folk-nonsense, virtually akin to astrology, everyday talk about the link between music and mood.

Kivy agrees that music may express affective states, but he argues that music does not arouse the kinds of affective states discussed in “Art and Mood.”<sup>8</sup> It does not seem to us, however, that if the music is provoking brain states in our motion and affective centers that that situation is aptly described as merely expressing the affect, rather than also arousing it. Isn't the relevant notion of arousal that of changes in the body, and aren't the brain and the regions in question parts of the body?

Moreover, conceptually speaking, we are not convinced that expressing affect and arousing it are always as discrete as Kivy suggests. Might not the detection of the expressive contour of a piece of music or some other form of stimulus sometimes occur by way of arousal? That is, although in some cases the detection of expressive properties can occur without feeling something like what the property names, in others, aren't we able to identify the expressive quality of the work precisely because of the way the work moves us? We may call the thriller suspenseful because it contains a cascade of scenes that puts us on the edge of our seats.

The hypothesis advanced in “Art and Mood” is that *some* music can elicit moods by engendering feelings of movement. For example, much music has a pulse that in the appropriate circumstances incites our tapping or clapping or finger-snapping in concert. That is, the music in these cases has a pulse that triggers an impulse or feeling in us to move concordantly.

For example, while listening to Steve Reich's *Tehillim* on one's Walkman or iPod, we predict, one is likely to notice oneself walking in time to the beat. The tempo is probably quicker than the speed at which one usually walks. Likewise, one is apt to note that, all things being equal, one finds oneself in a happy mood when walking around listening to pieces such as *Tehillim*. We don't need to listen for the purpose of inducing a happy mood—although we may; rather, the happy mood happens naturally, even when listening for the structure of the rhythm and for the beauty of the vocal line.

Everyday experience, in other words, confirms that there are intimations of movement that we all hear and feel in music, which, in turn, we recognize as appropriate to the mood we associate with the music. Moreover, *pace* Kivy, it is initially plausible

to hypothesize that music arouses moods through movement, as evidenced by cases of finding ourselves unconsciously moving with music in a way that segues, in addition, with the direction in which our mood is headed. This is very obvious not only with experiences such as walking while listening to pieces such as *Tehillim*, but can also be sensed while listening to *Tehillim* seated as phenomenological thrills buzz through our system.

This, furthermore, is beginning to be substantiated scientifically. That is, we need not rest here on anecdotal evidence alone, as there is research indicating that the same part of the brain, the cerebellum, is responsible for processing both music and movement.<sup>9</sup>

In “Art and Mood,” the aforesaid movement impulses were correlated with the feeling constituents of moods, and it was conjectured that these sensations of movement could elicit feeling-biased cognitions in various ways. For example, these impulses might draw our attention toward persons or things moving at that pulse—say, dancers skipping to the beat—or they might lead us to imagine something, including something as disembodied as a moving point of view, or someone, including ourselves, moving at that pace. In such cases, the imagining might not be imagistic. It might involve local bodily movement such as bouncing our leg in place and in time with the music in a way that models, subconsciously or otherwise, the manner in which we would move to the sonic stimulus were our theater of operations wider. And, again, there does appear to be scientific evidence that the movement, timing, and affective sectors of the brain are connected in ways consistent with our initial hypothesis.

In summary, then, an explanation of the process in which some music—actually quite a lot statistically—engages moods is that it induces feelings of movement that, among other things, may incline us in various ways to imagine, cognize, or otherwise dwell on movement that corresponds to the music in question. Kivy does not deny that this can happen nor even that it occurs quite normally. He simply rejects the proposition that this is an acceptable or canonical way of listening to music, even if this is what various creators and performers of music aim at educating and even if this is what many music lovers testify is what they are after. Once again, although now for somewhat different reasons, Kivy maintains that they don’t know what they are talking about.

### III. ON LISTENING TO MUSIC PROPERLY

Although Kivy concedes that people may listen to music in the way we suggest, he does not think that this has much bearing on questions in the philosophy of music. For, there’s no accounting for what people *may* do—after all, left to their own devices, people *may* do anything. There’s simply no end to the mischief in which these pesky critters can get themselves entangled. In short, that people *do* listen to music in the way that we indicate does not show that that is the way or even a way in which they are *supposed* to be listening. For Kivy, listening to music imaginatively in terms of movement is a recipe for letting our minds wander—specifically, for letting our minds wander *away* from the music and its pertinent sonic properties. It is a paradigmatic case of “wool gathering.”

It does not seem to us that this is a fair description, however, as the imagining that we have in mind is strictly tied to properties of the music, such as its pulse. The kind of wandering-mind-on-a-wool-gathering-reverie that is generally agreed on all sides to be illicit occurs when the putative listener lays a narrative such as “death (or is it destiny?) knocking on the door” on the opening bars of Beethoven’s Fifth Symphony. From whence in the music doth death (or is it destiny?) arise? But the movement-prompts that serve as the basis for our imaginative activities (whether mental or behavioral or both), about which we are talking, come from the right place artistically speaking—from the music, from the structure itself of the sonic array. Thus, it is not mind wandering that we have here, but mind focusing on the relevant properties of the music *qua* art. This is a matter of being absorbed in the music and need not involve the listener in consciously constructing extraneous mental pictures or narratives.

Kivy alleges that in “Art and Mood” an attempt was made to dragoon the component of the mood state that biases the subject to cognize things in a certain way—such as thoughts of swirling movements while listening to a waltz—as the conceptual content of the pertinent affective state. But, he argues that such instrumental music has no conceptual content. Thus, he refutes the hypothesis that music induces moods in the way he challenges the view that music engenders what he calls garden-variety emotions. But this criticism misses its mark.

On our view, moods do not require any conceptual content. The fact that we can imagine

characteristic movement is merely evidence that a biasing of cognitive operations is in place. The imagination does not provide content that is necessary to bring about a cognitive bias. There is no “program” being illicitly laid on the music here. Rather, it is the somatic feeling that brings about the bias, and imaginings are simply one way in which the mood state might be manifested, a way that indicates that it is really a mood that is being brought about and not a leg twitch. (Moreover, where the imaginings take wing, the bias usually moves effortlessly in the right way—for example, swiftly rather than slowly in reaction to the scherzo in Mendelssohn’s *Midsummer’s Night Dream*.)

There can be no question that the association of music (including pure instrumental music) and movement is most typically appropriate. There appears to be no known culture in which the two—most often in terms of dance (but also marches, rituals, work songs, and so forth)—are not acknowledged by practitioners to be intimately related. There is, dare we say it, a natural bond between music and movement. This is even true of the tradition of classical music in the West where many musical forms originated in the service of dance, such as the Baroque Sarabande, Gavotte, Bouree, and Gigue, as well as the Minuet, the Waltz, the Polish Mazurka, the gypsy Czardas, and so forth. These forms were initially contrived, among other things, to inspire movement imaginatively and somatically, and as a result of trial and error, they eventually succeeded in doing so with remarkably converging results. There is no reason to suppose that when these forms are deployed, as they have been frequently employed historically, in a concert-hall context, that it is no longer appropriate to attend to them by fancying movement. How can Kivy charge that this is a noncanonical way of listening? It is bred in the bone of even the classical tradition. Don’t let us start on the popular tradition where the link with, among other things, courtship (to speak euphemistically) dancing and the imagination thereof is indissoluble.

At this point, Kivy’s response will be that even if mood-inspired-movement-imagining is a canonical way of listening to music, it is not a canonical way of listening for formalists. It is not a *formalistically* canonical way of listening. Perhaps not. Nevertheless, it seems hard to deny that it is an acceptable way of listening to instrumental music—of attending to pertinent sonic properties (such as pulse) of music *qua* music in both the Western tra-

dition and others. It may not be the way formalists like to listen to music, but it is not evident that the formalist can deny that it is a proper way attending to music without begging many of the most important questions in this neighborhood.

Moreover, it should be recalled that it was never the stated intention of “Art and Mood” to show that listening for mood-inspired movement in music was a canonical mode of *formalist* listening. Formalists may not listen for mood; they may prefer not to, even if moods overtake them in the course of their experience—that’s their prerogative. And it’s okay by our lights. This is big tent aesthetics. “Art and Mood” only attempted to make room in the tent—*pace* formalist objections on the basis of a certain (cognitivist) conception of the emotions—for *sentimentalists* (that is, those of us who think that *some* affective responses—for example, mood responses—to pure instrumental music are apposite, even artistically so). We never hoped to convert Kivy, but only to placate him (logically speaking).

#### IV. FURTHER IMPLICATIONS

Although above we have attempted to address the brunt of Kivy’s objections, he expresses several interesting asides that deserve brief comment. For instance, he voices skepticism about whether moods are aroused by music on the grounds that there would be too many affective episodes of remarkably short duration evoked by much music to count as moods. To have as many shifts of affect in such short intervals would suggest mental disorder rather than what we usually think of as moods, which are states that endure over appreciable stretches of time.

In “Art and Mood,” however, mood was expressly not defined in terms of duration. Moods may come and go swiftly. Nevertheless, we do concede that moods are not normally fleeting. But the moods induced by music have a somewhat different etiology than moods in life. Moods in life are engendered by our coping resources relative to the challenges that beset us. Moods from music are artificially stimulated by the feelings of movement pulsating in the music. They are not as enduring just because they are not typically as dependent on the state of our coping resources.

Furthermore, what may be rapidly shifting as the music proceeds may often be feelings rather

than full-fledged moods.<sup>10</sup> We might prefer to speak of moods only where the states begin to take on a relatively stable feeling-biased coloration.

Kivy does not like the evolutionary story about the connection made between music and the detection of movement made in "Art and Mood." Perhaps it was too tenuous. But in its place, we offer this one: the perception of movement in the music is connected to our sense of timing.<sup>11</sup> That is, the music gives an impression of moving through time, and this impacts on the parts of our brain that synchronize movement and timing.

To a large degree, much music induces a converging sense of cadence among listeners. Culturally, this has provided a mechanism for co-ordinating vital social activities among conspecifics. For example, marches facilitate martial projects as do some dances; work songs, labor; religious music, ritual; dances, courtship and mating; and so on. Music in virtue of its power to direct our movement proclivities is, in other words, an instrument for fostering social cohesion among groups, and this, in turn, is an adaptive boon.

Moreover, not only does movement, like that inspired in social dance music, co-ordinate our activities temporally; the music in question can color activities affectively by matching the movement with a mood that serves the activity. It is no accident that marches engender a strong positive mood. They would hardly be advantageous if they instilled depression.

#### V. SUMMARY

In "Music and Mood," Kivy challenged the conjectures about the relationship between absolute or pure instrumental music advanced in "Art and Mood." In this discussion, we have attempted to address Kivy's refutations. Against the charge that there is no evidence on behalf of the earlier conjectures, we have cited the growing body of scientific data. To the objection that imagining movement in response to the music is a matter of "wool gathering" or some such other form of daydreaming, we have argued that the mental states in question are directed to precisely where they should be directed from the artistic point of view and absorbed *qua* art by what they should be absorbed by—namely, sonic structures of the music, such as pulse. Perhaps we have not shown that this way of attending to the music is a canonical *formalist* mode of at-

ention. But we feel that all we need to do in order to make our case at this point is to defend the view that it is a canonical way of listening to absolute or pure instrumental music.<sup>12</sup>

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1. Noël Carroll, "Art and Mood: Preliminary Notes and Conjectures," *The Monist* 86 (2003): 521–555.

2. Peter Kivy, "Mood and Music: Some Reflections for Noël Carroll," *The Journal of Aesthetics and Art Criticism* 64 (2006): 271–281.

3. Kivy, "Mood and Music," pp. 275–276.

4. See "Music of the Hemisphere" by Cove Thompson in *The New York Times*, Arts and Leisure Section (Sunday, December 31, 2006), p. 26. This article reports on the research of Daniel J. Levitin. For a more ample account of Dr. Levitin's work, see Daniel J. Levitin, *This Is Your Brain on Music: The Science of a Human Obsession* (New York: Dutton, 2006). For further information about the scientific research supportive of the view that music can impact affect, see the above discussion by Laura Sizer, "Moods in the Music and the Man: A Response to Kivy and Carroll."

5. See Klaus Scherer and Marcel R. Zentner, "Emotional Effects of Music: Production Rules," as well as Isabelle Peretz, "Listen to the Brain: A Biological Perspective on Musical Emotions," both in *Music and Emotion*, edited by Patrik N. Juslin and John A. Sloboda (Oxford University Press, 2001). Scherer and Zentner also mention a 1997 study by Carol Krumhansel in which it was shown that sad music aroused sad moods, happy music happy moods, and frightening music fearful moods, as measured by changes in the autonomic nervous system (Juslin and Sloboda, p. 375).

6. *Ibid.*

7. Cited in Scherer and Zentner, p. 380.

8. Kivy, "Music and Mood," p. 277.

9. Studies that hypothesize the mechanisms by which music brings about action tendencies (whether to dance or to fall asleep) are reported in Scherer and Zentner, pp. 377–379.

10. We owe this point to Susan Feagin.

11. See Noël Carroll and Margaret Moore, "Feeling Movement: Music and Dance," in *Revue Internationale de Philosophie* (forthcoming).

12. The authors would like to thank Susan Feagin for her comments on an earlier draft of this discussion piece.



## Moodophilia: A Response to Noël Carroll and Margaret Moore

### I. SEGUE

As in the case of Laura Sizer's discussion, that of Noël Carroll and Margaret Moore is richly provocative, and contains far too much material in it than I can possibly deal with in the space allotted for my response. But a good deal of what Carroll and Moore have to say relies on *what psychologists have shown*. I am able to skip over a lot of that and refer the reader back to what I had to say on that in my response to Sizer.

I also rely here on the reader having read my response to Sizer and, in particular, my statement of the enhanced formalist's credo in order to save myself and the reader from unnecessary repetition (although some repetition is, alas, necessary, as some of the points Carroll and Moore make are very similar to those made by Sizer, but different enough to require a separate response).

With that being said, on we go to the business at hand.

### II. WHAT ARE WE TALKING ABOUT?

Carroll and Moore make a good deal out of my having suggested that, in their words, "people don't know what they are talking about," when people ascribe what I have been calling the garden-variety moods to themselves rather than to the music (p. 318). I made the same claim elsewhere about the garden-variety emotions. Well, it's good for a laugh; and God knows, having practiced philosophy all of these years, I have had more than one opportunity to laugh at myself.

But in claiming, by way of philosophical analysis, that "people don't know what they are talking about," I am in pretty good company. When Plato introduced the theory of forms, he was telling the Athenians that they didn't know what they were talking about, which is to say, they were mistaken about what entities certain of their referring expressions *really* had as their objects of reference. When Francis Hutcheson and David Hume averred that the terms 'beautiful' and 'good' *really* referred to "sentiments" in the observer, not "objective" qualities in the external world, they were telling their contemporaries that *they* didn't know what they were talking about, which is to say, that they were mistaken as regards the reference of the

terms 'beautiful' and 'good.' They—Hutcheson and Hume—were advancing what the late J. L. Mackie called an "error theory."<sup>1</sup> If Carroll and Moore think that it is a *reductio* to claim that people don't know what they are talking about, in the manner in which error theories do, I think they are sadly mistaken.

It is indeed an error theory that I proposed to explain what *some* listeners to *some* music, namely, absolute music in the Western canon, were doing when they reported having the garden-variety emotions the music was expressive of being aroused by it. This error theory can easily be applied to the garden-variety moods as well. And if one understands exactly what the theory says, it will be seen directly that Carroll and Moore have adduced no evidence that is inconsistent with it. So here is the theory.

Some people, when they hear a passage of (say) gloomy music, hear the gloom in the music, are deeply moved by the music's beauty, and because the object of their affective state is the beautifully gloomy passage of music, they mistakenly describe the affective state the gloomy music has moved them to as "gloom."

Here are two results of psychological experimentation that Carroll and Moore apparently think refute my error theory.

1. "Recent psychological research indicates . . . that there is evidence that music does causally stimulate the human affective system" (pp. 318–319).
2. "Listeners have been shown to be able to distinguish between the expressive properties of music and the emotions they feel" (p. 319).

Now whatever theory of musical emotions or moods these results are supposed to refute, it is certainly not *my* error theory.

With regard to (1): *of course* absolute music stimulates the human affective system, on my view, because, on any view, absolute music of the Western canon deeply moves lovers of that kind of music. (See proposition 7 of the enhanced formalist's credo, above.) And with regard to (2): *of course*, on my view, listeners can and do distinguish between their affective states and the expressive properties of the music. *My* error theory does not place the error in *misplacing* the emotion; it places it in *misdescribing* the emotion. And, by the way, *psychologists have shown that* subjects

misdescribing the emotions they are experiencing is a common phenomenon.

tices must get the ax. To think you can have it all is a pipe dream.

### III. A (BRIEF) DISCOURSE ON METHOD

### IV. WOOL GATHERING

I don't know whether to laugh or cry when I read that, according to Carroll and Moore, I do *not* share with them the belief that "the task of the philosophy of music is in large measure an effort to rationally reconstruct the practice of music—to make sense out of the ways in which practitioners, creators, and listeners alike understand that practice and articulate their understanding of it" (p. 318). It is what I have described in many of my writings on music as (following Stuart Hampshire) the Aristotelian method in philosophy and have stated over and over again that it is *my* method.<sup>2</sup> And I would have thought I would be the last philosopher in the world, who has written about the art of music, to be accused of running rough-shod over musical practice in the interest of theory *a priori*. My writings are chock full of appeals to practice over theory, and my love and respect for musicians, musicologists, music theorists, and other musical practitioners is well known. (Carroll and Moore have apparently mistaken me for Nelson Goodman—a compliment I do not merit.)

That being said, I am obliged to point out to Carroll and Moore that no experienced practitioner of the Aristotelian method, at this stage of the game, can possibly think her theory can accommodate *all* of our intuitions and practices in any area of philosophical inquiry, be it ethics, or epistemology, or metaphysics—or *philosophy of art*. And that for the simple reason that philosophical analysis has shown time after time that our intuitions, in any given area, *are not entirely consistent with one another*.

Thus, anyone who wishes to theorize about music, even in the Aristotelian manner, must, at some point, decide on theoretical grounds, that some intuitions and practices must be overridden—always, of course, with suitable explanation for the decision. Carroll and Moore and I may disagree about what intuitions or practices must get the theoretical ax. But they, no more than I, can avoid the inevitable outcome. No theory is going to include them all.

Carroll and Moore and I do not disagree about *method*. We disagree about what is the correct theory and, in consequence, what intuitions and prac-

In my discussion of Noël Carroll's original article on moods in art, I was critical of a *particular mechanism* whereby he claimed that music arouses the garden-variety moods. It is a mechanism that, according to Carroll, goes something like this: "Stately music may dispose us to imagine moving in a stately manner ourselves, to imagine others doing so, or to remember people moving in a regal procession, or to construct mental images of such pomp and ceremony," and so on.<sup>3</sup>

My objection to this proposed mechanism for mood arousal in music was that it involved a kind of nonformalist listening and that it therefore did not help forward Carroll's project, which was, as I understand it, to show how garden-variety moods can be aroused by absolute music that is listened to in the enhanced formalist manner.

Furthermore, I characterized this mode of listening as noncanonical because, in my view, such imagistic listening projects something onto the music that is not "really" there. It is this characterization that Carroll and Moore call the charge of "wool gathering" and that they try to respond to in their present discussion.

Now what I am about to claim I cannot possibly prove conclusively in this brief reply, because it would require some detailed comparisons between Carroll's original article and the Carroll and Moore discussion, with suitable quotations to back it up. The claim is simply this: as far as I can make out, Carroll and Moore seem to have backed off, at least in *some* places, from the proposed mechanism for mood arousal in Carroll's original article, with its suggestions of imagistic listening, and have tried to provide a mechanism completely free of the charge of wool gathering and nonformalistic listening, that can do the job within enhanced formalist constraints. As they put it in one place: "it is not mind wandering that we have here, but mind focusing on the relevant properties of the music *qua* art. This is a matter of being absorbed in the music and need not involve the listener in consciously constructing extraneous mental pictures or narratives" (p. 320).

This is a perfectly reasonable strategy. It does not, of course, answer the charge of wool

gathering against Carroll's *previous* proposal. But if it did succeed in showing that and how garden-variety moods are aroused in enhanced formalist listening, in some music lovers, and if there were nothing else about this phenomenon that could not be fitted into a reasonable philosophy of music, I would have no qualms at all about accepting it as a perfectly canonical mode of experiencing the absolute music canon. For I have repeated on many occasions that I do not claim that *my* version of enhanced formalism is the *only* canonical mode of listening. (See proposition 1 of the enhanced formalist's credo, above.)

One further point on wool gathering before I proceed to other matters: I am quite out front in my claim that imagistic and narrative listening to absolute music are noncanonical. And if this is a normative claim, then I am quite out front in believing that philosophy of music in particular, philosophy of art in general, are *in part*, normative enterprises. But given their statement of principles in their discussion, I do not see how Carroll and Moore can *exclude* wool gathering, as a canonical mode of listening, from their very capacious "tent." Perhaps this does not bother them; it would, however, bother me.

#### V. MOODS AND "MOODS"

Noël Carroll's project, in his article "Art and Mood," was substantial and of great philosophical interest. As I understand the musical portion of the project, it was to show that although absolute music, when listened to in what I call the enhanced formalist manner, cannot arouse the garden-variety *emotions*, it *can* arouse what I have been calling here the garden-variety *moods*.

One of my objections to Carroll's suggestion was that the moods a symphonic movement (say) is expressive of change quickly, suddenly, radically, and often. And these moods the music is expressive of, the listener is supposed to respond to by being put into those very moods himself, according to Carroll. But it seemed to me, and seems, to me still, that a normal human being could not possibly go through such an extreme variety of mood changes, so suddenly, and in so short a space of time.

The response of Carroll and Moore to this objection starts off with the quite mystifying statement that "in 'Art and Mood,' however, mood

was expressly not defined in terms of duration" (p. 321). It is mystifying because my objection never made mention—*never*—of the extended duration of moods as the reason such mood swings in music would be impossible for a normal human being. They seemed to me then, and seem to me now, impossible whether moods are of short or of long duration.

Stranger still, Carroll and Moore then go on to say, "Nevertheless, we do concede that moods are not normally fleeting" (p. 321). Well, if that is the case, it lends greater strength, obviously, to my objection. If "moods are not normally fleeting," then it seems even *more* unlikely than I supposed, in my original objection, that the normal, garden-variety moods are aroused by expressive properties of music for the previously stated reason.

By this time, the going begins to get pretty rough for the claim that the mood-expressive properties of absolute music arouse the garden-variety moods in listeners. And so, the entirely predictable happens. The claim, step by step, gets weakened. I say entirely predictable, because when, in the past, I argued that music does not arouse the garden-variety emotions, I was told that, well, in an attenuated sense it does: it arouses "emotions." When I claimed that absolute music does not possess meaning, I was told that, well, in an attenuated sense it does: it possesses "meaning." And when I claimed that absolute music, because it does not possess meaning, cannot be profound, I was told that, well, in a different sense of 'profound,' it was "profound." What I always got in exchange was something in inverted commas—and so, as well, in this case.

First, it is conceded that the "moods" aroused by absolute music "are not as enduring" as moods "in life" because "the moods induced by music have a somewhat different etiology than the moods in life." And *finally*, it is conceded that we are not really talking about moods at all—that "what may be rapidly shifting [in the listener] as the music proceeds may often be *feelings* rather than full-fledged moods" (pp. 321–322, emphasis added).

And so Carroll's original, robust, and philosophically interesting claim in "Art and Mood" that absolute music, in formalist listening, can arouse the garden-variety *moods*, has "died the death of a thousand qualifications" (to appropriate Anthony Flew's fine phrase) and become the pallid and uninteresting claim that it can arouse "feelings." It is pallid and uninteresting because

no one in their right senses would deny it: certainly not *I*. Of course the experience of listening to absolute music arouses fleeting “feelings” in listeners, as does every other experience I can think of. What *I* was denying was that absolute music, when listened to formalistically, can induce the garden-variety *moods, sans phrase*: gloom, depression, and such like. The subject was *moods*. Carroll and Moore have simply changed the subject.

Of course, my feelings in listening to absolute music change with the music. But unless some baggage is put on that nondescript word ‘feeling’ that is inconsistent with my previously stated views, I gladly acquiesce in the claim. As it stands, it can perfectly well be taken as being, in substance, proposition 7 of the enhanced formalist’s credo.

“Feelings”? No problem. Ho hum!

#### VI. WHICH COMES FIRST?

Carroll and Moore say, “We are not convinced that expressing affect and arousing it are always as discrete as Kivy suggests.” And they go on to conjecture, “Might not the detection of the expressive contour of a piece of music . . . occur by way of arousal?” Or, in other words, “Aren’t we able to identify the expressive quality of the work precisely because of the way the work moves us?” (p. 319).

Unfortunately, Carroll and Moore do not provide a musical example to illustrate what they have in mind. And their conjecture does seem to me, in the absence of any example to support it, highly implausible.

The usual scenario for arousal, proposed by theorists like myself, who think that expressive properties are perceived *in* the music, but *unlike* myself, think the perception of these properties arouses the garden-variety emotions or moods the music is expressive of, is something like perceiving the sadness (say) of a face and then, by some form of empathy, or simulation, or “contagion” (as Stephen Davies describes it) coming to feel sad oneself. But how would it go the other way round? It sounds highly implausible to me that the face *first* makes me sad, and *then* I perceive the “expressive contour” of sadness in the face.

Take, for example, the sudden change from minor to major in the first movement of Mozart’s G-minor Symphony (K. 550) at the entrance, in

the exposition, of the second theme. One almost immediately perceives the change of mood from gloom to a kind of serene happiness. If this required *first* having one’s mood changed from gloom to serene happiness by the music and *then*, because of the change in mood, being able to recognize the serene happiness in the second theme, the new mood would have had to have been aroused in a matter of milliseconds. How this could be effectuated by the music I cannot imagine.

Furthermore, the example that Carroll and Moore adduce from literature (or is it the movies?) to illustrate their point is a strange one indeed. They write, “We may call the thriller suspenseful because it contains a cascade of scenes that puts us on the edge of our seats” (p. 319).

I would have thought this is *clearly* a case where we *first* perceive the scary things happening in the thriller, and *then*, in doing so, the thoughts of these scary things scare us and put us “on the edge of our seats.” Indeed, that is exactly what I thought Carroll *himself* was saying the thing was done in his masterful book on horror.<sup>4</sup>

That the mood should come first, and then the recognition of the mood in the music, strikes me as a wildly implausible conjecture, and the example Carroll and Moore adduce an unpersuasive one, to say the least, because it seems to illustrate exactly the opposite order of things. I would think their conjecture, far from encouraging converts to their view, is likely to have exactly the opposite effect.

#### VII. DANCIN’

Carroll and Moore say that in Western art music,

many musical forms originated in the service of dance. . . . These forms were initially contrived, among other things, to inspire movement imaginatively and somatically and, as a result of trial and error, they eventually succeeded in doing so with remarkably converging results. There is no reason to suppose that when these forms are deployed, as they have been frequently employed historically, in a concert-hall context, that it is no longer appropriate to attend to them by fancying movement. How can Kivy charge that this is a noncanonical way of listening? It is bred in the bone of even the classical tradition. (p. 321)

To begin, I presume Carroll and Moore are *not* arguing that because the Baroque and Classical dance forms in absolute music such as the

Sarabande, Gavotte, Bouree, Gigue, Minuet, and the rest, have their origin in dances made for dancing, the former must possess all of the musical characteristics of the latter. For that, clearly, would be a blatant instance of the genetic fallacy.

Second, Carroll and Moore *do* say that “there is no reason to suppose that when these forms are deployed . . . in a concert hall context, that it is no longer appropriate to attend to them by fancying movement.” But, on the contrary, there is very good reason to think that an entirely different mode of appreciation is appropriate to these dance forms, as they have been transmuted by the great composers of the Baroque and Classical periods from the simple dance forms from which they evolved. For example, as everyone knows, the characteristic rhythm of the danced-to Sarabande is the quarter-note, dotted quarter-note, eighth-note pattern in three-quarter time, obviously meant to direct the steps of the dancer. But just take a look (say) at the complex structure of the movement called “Sarabande,” in Bach’s B-minor Partita for Unaccompanied Violin (BWV 1002). Gone completely is the characteristic Sarabande rhythm, except for the time signature. Certainly one can’t dance a sarabande to it or imagine someone so doing. And if the complex structure of this movement tells us *anything* about how we are meant to attend to it, it is that we are meant to give our undivided attention, as best we can, to the complex polyphonic structure, with its real and implied counterpoint. That is its payoff. And anyone who can muster the concentration to extract this payoff while *at the same time* “fancying movement” has my deepest admiration.

To instance another case in point, need I remind Carroll and Moore that the Gigue, in Bach’s suites and partitas, frequently takes the form of a *fugue*—the most demanding of all musical forms, from the listener’s standpoint, as from the composer’s? Here, of all places, complete concentration on structure is required, and having images of dancing figures in one’s imagination strikes me as a ludicrous prospect. Certainly it is not a kind of listening I could accomplish, even if I wanted to.

Again, try dancing the minuet or imagine someone dancing it to the Minuet in Mozart’s Fortieth Symphony, with its hemiolas and thick contrapuntal structure after the first double bar. This clearly has little in common with the danced-to minuet except its name and its time signature. (And that Mozart knew well the difference between this kind

of “Minuet” and a minuet to be danced to can easily be seen by taking a look at the celebrated Minuet in *Don Giovanni*, or those minuets he composed for the *Redoutensaal*.) Like the bourees, sarabandes, and giges of the Baroque masters, the symphonic minuets of Haydn and Mozart, in their mature periods, are musical structures to be attended to with rapt concentration, which concentration would, I submit, be defeated by the kind of imaginative exercise Carroll and Moore are describing.

Carroll and Moore may reply, of course, that one can, if one wishes, listen to these dance movements in such a manner as to facilitate “fancying movement” of dancing figures, themselves and others. And of course, one can. I suppose many people do listen in that imaginative way. But that, needless to say, is not enhanced formalist listening, which is the only kind of listening that I am concerned in explicating.

Indeed, I have made a stronger claim than that this imaginative listening is not formalistic listening. I have claimed that it is not *canonical* listening to absolute music in the Western tradition. And to *this* claim Carroll and Moore respond: “How can Kivy charge that this is a noncanonical way of listening? It is bred in the bone of even the classical tradition.”

Now forgive me for being just a teeny bit touchy about this chastisement. For it makes it sound as if I have arrogantly, *ex cathedra*, as it were, like the Vicar of Christ, issued a ukase as to what is and is not canonical listening, in the complete absence of rational grounds, to simply be accepted on the authority of the speaker. But Carroll and Moore know that I have over the past thirty-five or more years built up a “philosophy of music,” stone by stone, dealing with music and the emotions, absolute music, program music, opera, music and representation, which has as one of its elaborately argued implications that the kind of imaginative listening they seem to be describing here is not a canonical way of listening to the Western absolute music canon.

I suggested, it will be recalled, in an earlier section of this discussion, that it seemed to me as if Carroll and Moore had backed off from Carroll’s original notion of a kind of listening in which motion events were imaged by the listener. Here, however, they seem to be relapsing into Carroll’s old view. The dances of which they speak, in the concert hall, “inspire movement imaginatively.”

And the only sense that I can make of this is that I imagine movement, in listening, by imagining some character, either myself or someone else, performing the imagined movements. And that kind of imagining, in musical listening, to *the absolute music canon*, is not, in my view, formalistic listening.

If there *are* a lot of people out there who think the previously described kind of imagistic listening to absolute music *is* canonical listening—and I am sure there are—then here is one mode of discourse or practice that must be reformed in the light of theory. I make no apology for that—it is part and parcel of the Aristotelian method, as I understand and apply it. Michael Dummett has characterized it admirably, in writing of how he conceives of a successful theory of meaning: “If the best fully coherent theory of meaning for a language fails to fit completely with the conventional practices of its speakers, the language is in need of reforming; and the theory will show in which respects it needs to be reformed.”<sup>5</sup>

Of course, I cannot elaborate in this place the entire system I have developed over the years, which has as one of its precepts that the previously described mode of listening is not canonical. But in a word, it is not canonical, because the music of which I speak was not intended to be, ideally, heard that way and has a better payoff when heard as it was intended.

It could be replied to this claim that authorial intention is irrelevant to interpretation, and the way the composers of whom I am speaking intended their music to be heard is no constraint on how it can canonically be heard. I doubt, however, if Carroll, at least, would take this line because, I believe, he is, as I am, a supporter of intention-based interpretation. The issue between us, then, is not the relevance of intention to interpretation, but whether I, or Carroll and Moore, have the right handle on how the absolute music canon was intended to be heard. And that issue, clearly, cannot be settled decisively here and now.

#### VIII. THE VIEW FROM MY ARMCHAIR

Carroll and Moore chide me, in their opening remarks, in this wise: “Nor do we think that facts about human psychology can be adjudicated by armchair reasoning from first principles” (p. 318). *What* I am being chided for in this passage and

*whether* I merit chastisement are questions whose answers are far from clear to me.

To start, I was not aware of making statements about human psychology on the basis of “first principles.” I don’t even know what Carroll and Moore *mean* by “first principles.”

Do they mean by “first principles” principles established a priori? If so, I deny the charge. I do not believe I have ever done that in *any* of my writings.

Certainly I have based some of my philosophical analysis of the emotions in music on various items of what is customarily called “folk psychology,” and on more or less commonsensical notions about human psychology that we all rely on in our ordinary lives. And I have done *that* from my armchair. (Where *else* does one do philosophy?) But even if one wants to call the previously mentioned psychological materials “first principles,” they are certainly not first principles established a priori. They are, I would have thought, the result of eons of the collective human experience.

And if the charge is that I have done the philosophical analysis of the emotions from my armchair, with folk psychology and common psychological sense as part of my data, it is a strange charge indeed, coming from Noël Carroll. For the two of his books that I admire most—and splendid books they are—the book on horror mentioned already, and the *Philosophy of Mass Art*, both do that very same thing with, I should add, consummate skill.<sup>6</sup> I had thought that Carroll and I shared the same method in this regard.

Of course, there *are* those who think that when neuroscience, brain science, psychology, philosophy of mind, and the rest bring in their final conclusions, folk psychology, and psychological common sense will be shown to be completely false, and all human behavior caused by factors yet unknown. But whether that event will ever transpire is open to serious doubt. And as of now, folk psychology and psychological common sense seem to me still to be a reasonable basis for my life, and for my philosophy.

Actually, I am beginning to get the impression, from reading Sizer, Carroll and Moore, and others as well, that one is not to make *any* statement about human psychology that does not emanate from a psychology laboratory and that “a posteriori” no longer means “after experience,” but “after experiment.” I am put in mind of the old story about the two behaviorists who meet on the street.

One of them says to the other: “You’re fine. How am I?”

Let me suggest that there is emerging an insidious kind of “armchair psychology,” other than the kind I have apparently been accused of, among philosophers of art in general and philosophers of music in particular. It consists of accepting, in your armchair, without question, *anything* psychologists claim they have *shown* and expecting others to do so as well, without examining either the design or the results of the experiments that are supposed to be doing the “showing.” We are supposed to be cowed by the highest of all authorities: SCIENCE. But with regard to the science of psychology, I think philosophers are well advised, not of course to ignore it—certainly, however, to exercise some healthy critical caution. We should all be from Missouri.

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1. See J. L. Mackie, *Ethics: Inventing Right and Wrong* (Harmondsworth: Penguin Books, 1977).

2. See, for example, Peter Kivy, “*Ars Perfecta*: Toward Perfection in Musical Performance?” *The British Journal of Aesthetics* 46 (2006).

3. Noël Carroll, “Art and Mood: Preliminary Notes and Conjectures,” *The Monist* 86 (2003): 548–549.

4. See Noël Carroll, *The Philosophy of Horror or Paradoxes of the Heart* (New York and London: Routledge, 1990).

5. Michael Dummett, *Truth and the Past* (Columbia University Press, 2004), p. 26.

6. See Noël Carroll, *A Philosophy of Mass Art* (Oxford University Press, 1998).