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Résumé de l'article

Écouter est devenu un enjeu majeur de la composition musicale depuis le milieu du siècle dernier, alors que Pierre Schaeffer inaugurait avec la musique concrète une des tendances de ce qui s'établirait sous le nom de musique électroacoustique. La classification des modes d'écoute de la musique présentés dans cet article n'est pas concernée par l'étude chronologique de l'écoute au moyen d'exemples musicaux historiques et de leur contexte social respectif. Comme la classification que je propose ici vise à analyser les processus de réception, au sens large, j'ai trouvé son fondement dans les différents niveaux d'interprétation formulées par Peirce dans sa classification des interprétants.

Nine Modes of Listening to Music

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In his book *What is Music*, J.J. de Moraes (1983 : 63-70), in a chapter under the title "Ways of Listening", divides these ways in three broad levels : (1) to listen emotionally; (2) to listen with the body; (3) to listen intellectually. There is here an obvious analogy of these three modes with Peirce's phenomenological categories : Firstness, Secondness and Thirdness respectively.

Although well known, these categories can be summarily understood from the following correspondences : Firstness or Monad corresponds to the notions of chance, uncertainty, vagueness, possibility, irresponsible and free originality, spontaneity, freshness, potentiality, presentness, immediacy, quality, feeling. Secondness or Dyad is determined, terminated, correlative, needed, reactive, being linked to the relative notions of polarity, denial, matter, reality, crude and blind force, compulsion, action-reaction, effort-resistance, here and now, opposition, effect, occurrence, fact, vividness, conflict, surprise, doubt, result. Thirdness or Triad is the medium, becoming, that which is in development, it is generality, continuity, growth, mediation, infinite intelligence, law, regularity, learning, habit, sign.

The categories are ubiquitous and therefore they are always intertwined. Similarly, the three types of hearing are entangled; they are inseparable because we are at the same time emotion, body and intellect. There is, however, a principle of dominance which may characterize the prevalence of a mode of listening over the other two. Since listening implies the psychological peculiarities and preferences of particular interpreters it is not possible to establish or classify *a priori* which types of music would fit into each of these modes. A trained musician, for instance, may have a much stronger emotion when listening to Boulez's *Pli selon Pli* than a layperson will have when listening to Tchaikovsky's

Concert for Violin and Orchestra. There are, moreover, intellectual emotions which may be as intense as the emotions triggered by any other types of experiences. Even so, one cannot deny that certain types of music are more likely to produce certain emotions over others.

The classification of the modes of listening to music that I will present in this paper, will take as its starting point Moraes' tripartite division. It is not concerned with the chronological study of listening by means of musical examples from historical periods and their respective social context, as the well known *Listening to Music*, by Crayg (2008), is. As my classification aims at the processes of reception in a broad sense, I found its foundation in the different interpretative levels formulated by Peirce in his classification of the interpretants. In a panoramic view that can be supplemented by a more detailed study (Santaella 1996), the interpretants – which Peirce calls immediate, dynamical and final or normal – are studied by him in the light of the logic of the three categories. Hence, the immediate interpretant is Firstness; it is the potential to mean inscribed in the sign itself. "It is the range – always vaguely circumscribed – of the interpretant-generating power of the sign in a given time" (Ransdell 1983 : 42). Therefore, this interpretant is inside the sign, it objectively belongs to the sign, and is independent of its encounter with any interpreter. It is only when this encounter happens that at least a portion of that potential will be put into action by the interpreter. The dynamical interpretant is Secondness; the interpretant that is effectively produced in the mind of any interpreter. It is therefore the empirical, existential, and in the case of the human interpreter, it is a psychological fact. When the sign reaches any interpreter, an effect will be produced in that mind. This effect has always the nature of a sign or quasi sign which may find its translation into an external sign.

The final or normal interpretant, the interpretant in itself is Third and corresponds to a final, ideal limit of interpretation, which is never actually attainable. It would be the ultimate realization of the interpretability of the sign, the ultimate realization of the potentiality to signify inscribed in the immediate interpretant. "It is the idea of the sign as it would come to be regularly and completely interpreted in an ideal long-run course of semiosis" (Ransdell *ibid.*). It is the empirical performance of the dynamical, singular interpretants which is responsible for the growth of the power of the sign to be interpreted. If it were possible to reach the ultimate limit of the sign's interpretability, the final interpretant would be fully realized. As this is impossible because we are never in a position to say that such and such a dynamical interpretant is the final one, any dynamical interpretant is always *in medias res* of the final interpretant which is permanently in a state of becoming.

Listening corresponds to the effect that any music is able to produce in the act of perceiving of particular listeners. However, before meeting any listener, the sign in itself is endowed with the potentiality of the

immediate interpretant, that is, the potential effects that music as a particular type of sign may produce in a listener. As soon as any music finds an effective listener, then we come to the level of the dynamical interpretant, the real effects that it actually produces in the perception and mind of the listener.

Based on the recurrence of his three categories, Peirce segmented the dynamical interpretant into three more classes : the emotional, the energetic and the logical interpretant (CP 5.475-476). The correspondence of these three classes with the three modes of listening seems obvious. To listen emotionally is the first effect that music is able to produce in the perception of the listener. Listening with the entire body corresponds to the energetic interpretant, since it concerns a certain type of action that is performed in the act of reacting to a semiotic process. To listen intellectually means incorporating logical principles and knowledge that guide the comprehension of music.

When I reaplied these three interpretative classes within each level of Moraes' tripartite division, I came to a subdivision in nine modes of listening to music : three modes of listening with emotion, three modes of listening with the body and three modes of listening intellectually. These nine levels allow us to penetrate into the subtle layers of the process of listening that operate within each level.

Listening with Emotion

In the first level of emotion (1.1), what appears is nothing else than a simple, positive and pure quality of feeling. In situations like this, the listener is very close to turning into a mere capsule of feeling as if floating outside of time and space. Not a few musicologists and philosophers have called attention to this aptitude, which is proper to music, to produce states of feeling. These states are certainly more or less exceptional. It is not at just any moment that someone can become a kind of bubble or vague cloud of pure feeling. But according to the state in which we find ourselves, when our perception and mind are in a candid, porous state, when our sensitivity is frayed, if music comes to our perception in moments like this it turns us into a pure quality of feeling. These are fleeting moments which are deprived, detached from any object of attention, when feeling in itself is magnetized in the evanescence of the sound that comes and vanishes. This state of feeling resists definitions or explanations, since it is what it is, unrelated to anything else. In these privileged moments, we come very close to the vulnerability that is characteristic of the feeling of love. Love in its purest form, love that does not ask for return and which is best expressed in the simple, open and gratefull love for life.

In this mode of listening, we become capsules of feeling because our self is passive, uncertain, wandering, a self that does not interpret and does not judge because, in those rare moments of pure listening,

our consciousness is just a whole indiscernible quality of feeling that is nothing else but feeling. Speaking of poetry, but something that also holds true for music, Borges calls this experience an aesthetic fact or a kind of happiness : "Something as obvious, immediate and indefinable as love, or as the taste of fruit, the vicinity of the sea, the proximity and skim of a beloved body" (1983 : 126).

While this first mode of listening is uncertain and vague, emotion without a self, since the self is loomed by feeling, the second mode (1.2) is the one of commotion, by which I mean that which moves us inwardly. It is therefore an internal momentum, a feeling that is set in motion, in a state of commotion, when our bloodstream heats up, our pulse accelerates and our heart quivers. Each person is attached to a certain kind of music capable of producing this effect of commotion, an effect that acts as a kind of fingerprint of our sensitiveness.

In the third level of feeling (1.3), we experience the so-called emotion, a kind of feeling that presents general characteristics. That's why emotions can be named : joy, surprise, anger etc. In this case, we can name what we feel because it is a sort of encoded feeling. It is at this level that we can say that a certain music is cheerful, another one is sad or otherwise melancholic, etc. For sure, music in itself cannot be reduced to those labels. In most cases our habits or cultural conventions are the reasons why we attach such labels to music.

However, at this point some complicating factors arise. There are, indeed, musical modes that are linked to a certain *pathos* and even a certain *ethos*. The Greeks attributed moral effects to each of the musical modes. Similarly, the indications of movement as '*allegro*', '*piano*', '*moderato*', etc. relate to certain moods. These expressive forms evoke emotions probably because different cadences and rhythms, bass and high tones, the different colors or timbres of the instruments have correspondences with vital rhythms, with the visceral sensations and biological pulsations that are also different, faster or slower, depending on whether we are feeling joy or grief, excitement or boredom, placidity, etc. In this regard, music provokes what I call instinctive emotion, resonances that are raised by pulse similarities. In short, there are sound rhythms that have correspondences with biological rhythms that accompany different states of feeling. Thus, cultural labels of emotion that we usually stick to various types of music are not entirely arbitrary, but find motivation in the similarities that can exist between music and biological pulse.

Listening with the Body

In the second mode of listening, listening with the body, we enter into the dominance of the rhythmic universe, of music percussion, when listening is not limited to the ears but expands into a kind of listening that takes charge of the entire body. In this first form (2.1), there is a

sort of dissipation of the frontiers between body and sound as if the body itself were the source of rhythm. This is very common in the collective ceremonies that the African-Brazilian forms of religion knows well. But this experience can also occur in people who have tremendous flexibility and body plasticity. Even when someone is not a trained dancer, this merging of sound and body is something that results from the ability to incarnate rhythm, as if music were coming from inside the body.

The second subdivision (2.2), on its turn, establishes a relation of contiguity between music and body. Music sounds and the body, even unknowingly, already begins to stir. This experience is also very familiar to Brazilians. It is just a question of listening to one of the variations of samba for the body to begin to speak for itself. This body duality reacting to a stimulus is under the dominance of the energetic character of listening.

The third subdivision (2.3) refers to choreographed dance when choreography functions as a plastic translation of the musical movements and rhythms. Every dance is a conversion of sound into a plastic, visual reality. In dance, the body convulsions give visible form to rhythm. In the case of choreography, certain conventions of visual representation function as indications for the position and movement of bodies in space.

Listening Intellectually

When we come to the intellectual modes of listening, we enter into the realm of the educated ears, I mean, of listeners sensitive to the most imperceptible subtleties of music. It is the universe of those who know music, and from this knowledge are able to extract an unsuspected pleasure from listening, an active, interactive and productive mode of listening of which laypersons are unaware.

In the first sub-division (3.1), the intellectual apprehension has a purely hypothetical character. The listener, however trained he(she) may be, stands before an act of reception in which his(her) intellect can only make assumptions. Of course, this is the case of musical pieces which broke with any pre-set reference system and thereby in the experimentation with sound materials unusual shapes are found, in the interstices of sound and noise. This puts the listener into a situation of uncertainty, unpredictability and continuous conjectures while accompanying the development of a work or composition.

The second subdivision of intellectual listening (3.2) is that of a relational listening when the listener is able to accompany the games of overlapping sound lines, the input and output of voices, instruments and materials, the progression of movements, the reversions, textures and conglomerates. In short, it is a listening ear that is able to visualize the structures and forms of the music.

The third sub-division (3.3) belongs to the expert who knows all the

musical systems of reference, in time and space. From this expertise he(she) derives the capacity to assess music as a peculiar form of thinking and to have a musical experience that only knowledge or erudition can bring.

Classifications of types of music listening became frequent given the importance that sound perception began to play as a key element of the composition itself in electroacoustic music (see Menezes 1996). Some of these classifications will now be discussed below.

Listening as the Pivot of Electroacoustic Music

Listening has become a major issue of musical composition from the middle of last century on, since Pierre Schaeffer (1966, 1973) inaugurated with concrete music one of the trends of what would be established under the name of electroacoustic music. Since then the development of this kind of music has been impressive. Its multiplicity and diversity is not restricted to one single genre but it is rather a nexus of numerous genres, styles, and subgenres, divided not only geographically but also institutionally, culturally, technologically, and economically (Demers 2010 : 5). In this context, Demers even develops a topic on the contemporary state of the art of listening to signs in post-Schaefferian electroacoustic music.

What is clear is that the point of departure for this emphasis on listening first comes from Schaeffer. Because it starts from the recording any kind of sound, including noise, as a potential element of a composition, concrete music depends on a form of qualitative listening Schaeffer (1966) called “reduced listening”. It is reduced because it implies listening to the sound for its own sake, that is, as an object that *is* a sound, dismissing its source and the meaning(s) it may otherwise convey. Being faced with sounds from all possible sources, the composer should be able to judiciously choose the sounds that seem more appropriate for handling and combining sound recordings with the help of electroacoustic techniques for mixing and composing. In this context, it is not surprising that Schaeffer (*ibid.*: 116) came to establish a table of listening functions into four types. To *hear* : emission of a sound – a sound event is presented to us; to *listen* : sound perception – crude perceptions of the outlines of a sound; to *understand* : selection of certain particular aspects of the sound – qualified insights of a qualified sound object; to *comprehend* : sense of values, signs, emergency of a sound and reference content – confrontation with extra-sound notions (*cf.* Chion 1983. See also 1991).

When he went deep into the phenomenology of listening conceived of as comprehension, Schaeffer (1966 : 150-153) established three musical situations and four listening attitudes or behavior. The three musical situations are : the acousmatic situation, when the listener has a specific intention concerning the sound itself, the proper sound quality

(unrelated to its mechanics) or to any intention of any other origin. The second situation is that of the player who interprets according to what he(she) can understand. The sound acts and the player understands and judges it by aiming at the success of his(her) intentions. The third situation is that of normal listening, which is more complicated because it combines, in a way, something from the previous two situations. It is passive, but not acousmatic, with some degree of curiosity turned toward the source constituted as a real other. But at the same time, this kind of listening cannot understand the other unless it simulates its activity.

The four listening attitudes or behavior lie on two oppositional axes : banal/practitioner, natural/cultural. The banal attitude is sensitive to the sound manufacturing conditions, but does not give the sound object particular attention, providing an automatic response. The practitioner is more skilled, better informed. The natural behavior responds to the sound's purely physical causes, while the cultural faces the cultural purposes of sound.

As mentioned earlier, the major importance of concrete music derives from the impulse that it was able to give for the development of electroacoustic music. With the advent of studios equipped with sophisticated computer technology, this kind of music mixed the techniques of concrete music with electronic music.

In the tradition of the *Groupe de Recherches Musicales* (*GRM*), founded by Schaeffer in 1958, Michel Chion (1993a and 1993b : 33-39) established three different listening attitudes that point to different objects: causal listening, semantic listening, and reduced listening. The coincidence with Peirce's categories jumps to view. However, in the presentation that will follow I inverted the order so that the correspondence with the categories appears more clearly : (1) reduced listening, (2) causal listening, and (3) semantic listening.

Coined by Schaeffer, 'reduced listening' refers to listening which affects the qualities and forms of sound, regardless of its cause and its meaning, and it takes the sound – verbal, instrumental, anecdotal or any other – as an object of observation rather than using it to look for something else which can be reached through it. The term "reduced" was borrowed from the phenomenological notion of reduction in Husserl. For the descriptive inventory of a sound in reduced listening one's sole aprehension is not enough. That is why sounds have to be recorded so that they can be listened to repeatedly. Recording is also necessary because a player or a singer cannot repeat exactly the same sound in two different occasions. They can only reproduce the height and general profile, but not the specific qualities that particularize a sound event and make it unique. Reduced listening therefore implies the fixation of sounds and this brings them to the status of *real* objects, sound *objects*.

Causal listening refers to the recognition of the source which causes the sound. Sometimes, the precise cause or individual (in the case of

someone's voice) is recognized (as in recognizing the voice of a familiar person). However, causal listening can have multiple levels, which relate to the sound itself and its context of origin. In ambiguous situations, and more frequently than we might think, what we recognize is just the nature of the source, that is, the sound of the agent, whether it is something mechanical, or the sound of an animal, or else a human-made sound, etc. These are signs that are used to deduce the nature of the cause. But we can still follow the precise causal history of the sound itself, for example, when we follow the sounds we thus associate with rubbing (accelerated, precipitated, etc.) and feel its pressure changes, speed and amplitude, but not knowing at all, the 'what' or 'how' of that rubbing.

Semantic listening refers to a code or language through which messages are interpreted. Verbal language is an example of this kind of listening attitude, along with interpreting the sounds made by Morse code and other sonic manifestations of codes. This listening is a very complex operation and is studied by linguistics. It is a purely differential listening, because language is structured as a system of oppositions. A phoneme's place in the system of language cannot be defined for its positive acoustic characteristics, but only through its distinctive (or differential) features as established in relation to all the other phenemes.

Also in the tradition of *GRM*, in the context of what he calls "acousmatic" music and inspired by the phenomenology of C. S. Peirce, François Bayle (1993 : 103) has proposed an ingenious trichotomy of the signification of listening, described as follows : three states of experience, Firstness, Secondness and Thirdness, put into action, respectively, hearing, cognition and music education, which in turn respectively bring into play qualities, objects and scenarios, with a view to presentification, identification and interpretation.

At the level of presentification all that is linked to the outbreak of sound is present : the call, the disappearance, the beat, the start-up, the scrub, the windstorm, etc. The second level, that of identification, designates the gesture and the resistence of the sound material : shock, compression, torsion, stretch, fragmentation, etc. The level of interpretation, finally, concerns everything which refers to a world, including a topsy-turvy world of poetic, abstract relations, echoes, values, colors, brightness, aura (*ibid.* : 187).

Although Schaeffer, Chion and Bailey are "practitioners" (to use the term coined by Schaeffer) belonging to the same tradition or school, their classifications are, to a certain extent, quite diverse. On the one hand, there is a diversity in the sources of inspiration that served them. Thus, while Schaeffer develops his listening types in reference to Husserl, Bayle owes his to Peirce. Yet, there is something in common in both classifications : both Husserl and Peirce were phenomenologists. As for Chion, he establishes a triad which, although not directly based on Peirce presents

nonetheless a perfect match with his categories, taking as the key axis for his classification the behavior of the listener in the act of listening.

At this point, one can readily see what distinguishes these three listening classifications from my nine modes of listening. Also based on Peirce, as well as Bayle's classification, my nine modes of listening, as already discussed, find their source much more in Peirce's theory of the interpretants than in his phenomenology. It is true that semiotics is not separate from phenomenology, but differs from it in the sense that the phenomenological (or phaneroscopic) categories are vague, while the semiotic conceptions provide us with a ready set of analytical distinctions operative in accounting for existing processes of signs or semiosis. Thus, the nine modes of listening were extracted from the types or degrees of the interpretant, a scaled set of interpretative levels guiding the emergence of the various modes of hearing.

Although Chion's classification is not based on Peirce, the fact that it is turned more specifically toward the act of listening makes it the closest to my nine modes of listening, as long as one takes into account that the nine modes of listening incorporate the body of the listener, an issue that is absent in all the other classifications. It is Peirce's energetic interpreter that leads us to realize that hearing depends not only on our ear and mind, but also, invariably depends on our body. This is why, when we listen to music, our body goes into action along with the feelings, commotions and emotions that speak in it.

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Abstract

Listening has become a major issue of musical composition from the middle of last century on, since Pierre Schaeffer inaugurated with concrete music one of the trends of what would be established under the name of electroacoustic music. The classification of the modes of listening to music that will be presented in this paper is not concerned with the chronological study of listening by means of musical examples from historical periods and their respective social context. As my classification aims at the processes of reception and in a broad sense, I found its foundation in the different interpretative levels formulated by Peirce in his classification of the interpretants.

Keywords : Music; Listening; Interpretants; Concrete Music.

Résumé

Écouter est devenu un enjeu majeur de la composition musicale depuis le milieu du siècle dernier, alors que Pierre Schaeffer inaugurait avec la musique concrète une des tendances de ce qui s'établirait sous le nom de musique électroacoustique. La classification des modes d'écoute de la musique présentés dans cet article n'est pas concernée par l'étude chronologique de l'écoute au moyen d'exemples musicaux historiques et de leur contexte social respectif. Comme la classification que je propose ici vise à analyser les processus de réception, au sens large, j'ai trouvé son fondement dans les différents niveaux d'interprétation formulées par Peirce dans sa classification des interprétants.

Mots-clés : Musique; écouter; interprétants; musique concrète.

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