

CSC 490

Question Set 4

Jacob Peck

A set of questions based on chapter 5 of Aiello's Musical Perceptions.

1. If you had to select one idea as the big picture message of Bamberger's text, and you had to convey it in just a sentence or two, what would it be?
  - People generally hear music in different ways, and these different hearings allow us to generate differing perspectives of the music in question.
2. What does MET stand for? What does MOT stand for?
  - MET stands for metrical. MOT stands for motivic.
3. When you first glanced at figure 5.1, were your thoughts more consistent with MET's representational perspective of the rhythmic sequence or with MOT's representational perspective of the rhythmic sequence?
  - My thoughts were more consistent with MOT's view, as I tend to *feel* the music in groups of beats, not feeling the rests so much.
4. Which drawing in figure 5.1, the "figural drawing" or the "metrical drawing" do you believe better represents the way people tend to hear the rhythmic sequence?
  - I believe more people would hear music in the way the figural drawing suggests.
5. Write a Clay program called MOT which corresponds to the "figural drawing" of figure 5.1. Display the program code *and* the textual output resulting from execution of the program.

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Clay> MOT
{ { C1 C1 } { C.5 C.5 C1 } { C1 C1 } { C.5 C.5 C1 } }

Meta> -DISPLAY(MOT)
MOT = P1 P2 P3 P4
P1 = P P
P2 = PS PS P
P3 = P P
P4 = PS PS P
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6. Write a Clay program called MET which corresponds to the "metrical drawing" of figure 5.1. Display the program code *and* the textual output resulting from execution of the program.

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Clay> MET
{ { C1 C1 } { C.5 C.5 } { C1 C1 C1 } { C.5 C.5 } { C1 } }

Meta> -DISPLAY(MET)
MET = P1 P2 P3 P4 P5
P1 = P P
P2 = PS PS
P3 = P P P
P4 = PS PS
P5 = P
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7. Draw a picture in the hand of MOT (prior to the dialog with MET and Jeanne) for the melody "For He's a Jolly Good Fellow".



8. Draw a picture in the hand of MET (prior to the dialog with MOT and Jeanne) for the melody “For He’s a Jolly Good Fellow”.



9. For Bamberger...
- Hearing music is a process of “instant” perceptual problem solving
  - Hearing in a new way is learning to enrich one’s own understanding of music
  - Both of the above**
10. Who wrote this?

The aspects of things that are most important for us are hidden because of their simplicity and familiarity. (One is unable to notice something—because it is always before one’s eyes.) The real foundations of his enquiry do not strike a man at all. Unless THAT fact has at some time struck him. –And this means: we fail to be struck by what, once seen, is most striking and powerful.

- Wittgenstein said this.

11. Bamberger distinguishes between “knowing how” and “knowing about” music. Why?
- She sees a distinction between the music you hear and enjoy, and the music you “know about”, or are able to talk about and analyze.
12. The concept of a “hearing” is central to Bamberger’s discussion. What is a musical hearing?
- A musical hearing is a performance, within the listener’s mind, that the listener finds most salient to a piece. A hearing is the way the listener takes in the music, and processes it for their own decoding.
13. Bamberger quotes the painter Ben Shahn as follows: “So one must say that painting is both creative and responsive. It is an intimately communicative affair between the painter and his painting, a conversation back and forth, the painting telling the painter even as it receives its shape and form.” She then, by analogy, observes that a hearing, too, is both creative and responsive, a conversation back and forth between the music as material, and the hearer as he or she shapes its meaning and form in some particular way. I’m thinking that the *degree of intimacy* and the *quality of communication* are interesting elements of the relationship between a creator and her creation, one effected by the language of communication!

Imagine yourself as a creator of melodies. Describe how you believe *degree of intimacy* and *quality of communication* are effected by your choice “conversing” in either *mentalese* or *Clay*—and say something about the implications of your choice in the light of your knowledge of and about music.

- I believe that both degree of intimacy and quality of communication are increased by conversing in mentalese over Clay, though Clay gives a much easier way to share ideas with others and visualize things such as grouping structure (as evidenced in questions 5 and 6). Personally, I would choose mentalese because typically I am only conversing with myself about music and I find it much easier to internalize something that is more intimately linked in with my own existence. In terms of knowledge of music theory however, I would be at a loss, and Clay would probably be better for me to explain with.

14. According to Bamberger, incoming sonic information...
  - a. Is structured by the environment
  - b. Holds the potential for being structured by a cognitive agent**
15. Say something interesting about the previous question.
  - I find this interesting as it allows for everyone to have a different hearing based on the processes going on in their own cognition. Different hearings mean different perspectives, and typically the more perspectives something elicits, the more value it holds, thus ranking music among the most valuable things in our culture.
16. On page 147 Bamberger discusses the pros and cons of representation from a philosophical perspective.
  - a. In your own words, articulate what you believe to be the most salient, compelling “pro” that she mentions.
    - Static representations of ephemeral things like music allow us to analyze and interpret things we otherwise might not have seen, such as MOT’s ghost beat.
  - b. In your own words, articulate what you believe to be the most salient, compelling “con” that she mentions.
    - Making something static tends to cement the concept to its representation, causing functional fixedness, and possibly preventing further interpretations.