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## EDITORIAL

Welcome to the second issue of *JMM: The Journal of Music and Meaning*.

Since the publication of our premier issue in the fall of 2003, JMM has attracted a truly gratifying amount of interest and a large number of contributions. This, we are convinced, reflects the relevance of a multidisciplinary forum for the study of music and meaning in the international research community. The phenomenon of musical meaning, evident in human experience and human culture, harbors a range of complexities whose extent, it seems, we are only beginning to realize. Points of contact are appearing in a multitude of scientific approaches to the study of music and meaning, in a manner which may have seemed unthinkable not long ago. The encounters occurring among this plurality of specialized scientific approaches are generating a dynamic that appears to have the potential for doing justice to the complexity of musical meaning.

A field of research that has generated a number of new perspectives on musical meaning during the last decade is that which offers theoretical speculations on the evolutionary origins of music. These bio-musicological perspectives do not account for the socio-historical meaning of specific musical works, which is most often the locus of music research, but may provide an understanding of the very capacity for musicality employed in musical expressions.

From an evolutionary viewpoint, though, it remains highly questionable whether music has adaptive value and thus can be said to be more than a biological offspring of central auditory functions evolved for other purposes. On the other hand, there do not seem to be firm grounds for rejecting the hypothesis that music may play a central role in human evolution. Theorizing on the role of music in evolutionary history thus remains rather speculative. Such speculation is not necessarily idle inquiry, however, in so far as these speculations in themselves can be fruitful to our understanding of the meaning of music. The very act of regarding music from the perspective of evolutionary time provides a conceptual framework for thinking about music that supplements, and perhaps even clarifies, conceptions of music as viewed within cultural-historical time. It would seem that the question of musical meaning gains phenomenological relevance by being posed from the ecological point of view of human beings: What does it mean to be a human mind with a musical faculty? (As to the question that drove Chomskian and more recent cognitive semantics: What does it mean to be a human mind equipped with linguistic competence?).

In every culture encountered on this planet we seem to be able to identify certain activities as 'musical'. Not only have ethnologists not yet found a human culture without music, but as individual minds we are instinctively able to distinguish a certain meaningful behavior as musical. Given the extreme variation of musical phenomena found around the world, including the explosion of diversity in musical forms within western culture, we still identify these most diverse forms of sound as music (even though some insist that we conceptually ought to speak of music in the plural, of 'musics'). The reality and persistence of the phenomenon might suggest that music is an integral part of human life, and consequently has been with us for quite some time. The common conviction that music is an evolutionary by-product (held by, among others, Steven Pinker, John D. Barrow or Dan Sperber), might well be arguing with a conception of music

as contemplative or pleasurable object, as prototypical in western culture, and not reflecting the complex and diverse human activities that are involved in music.

It seems increasingly clear that evolution is not purely physiological, but has shaped our cognitive functions as well. Our mental life has an evolutionary history. We could even speculate that music has played an important role in the emergence of 'the mental' in human evolution; that the playful structuring of the sound world forms an integral part of the evolution of the human mind. It has also been indicated that music plays a significant role in developing the ability of minds to relate to other minds, and thus for the evolution of communication and meaning. It is often held that the diversity of speech sounds in human language has co-originated with its symbolic structure, making it possible for humans to refer and communicate about objects or events not actually present. The 'prosodic' element of modern language and the melodic intonations of speech are thus seen to spring from the need to form an extensive system of abstract representations. However, studies in the ontogenetic development of pre-linguistic sound interaction between parent and infant (by Colwyn Trevarthen, Ellen Dissanayake, Sandra Trehub, Hanus & Mechthild Papousek and others), suggest that vocal intonations involve an affective exchange, which has great importance for the early emotional bonding between caregiver and infant. The prosodic expressions involving motor patterns seem to 'attune' their bodies in shared temporal sequences, signifying emotional states. This affective proto-musical communication creates a dynamic space for relating different structural appearances in time. The activity of establishing such a mapping between different structural domains of human experience could be identified as the premier feature of the human mind emerging in evolution (as suggested by research in cognitive archaeology). And it would seem that we need to direct attention to how the original emotive - proto-musical - character of early intentional life is preserved in the evolved systems of meaning we know as music and language. The prosody of our meaningful behavior seems endowed with an affective character that normally evades formal semantics.

In "Music and the Origins of Speeches" in our current issue, Danish biologist Jakob Christensen-Dalsgaard offers an evolutionary perspective on the origins of music. With reference to current perspectives on evolution and music, Christensen-Dalsgaard argues for a close link between human prosody and music, supported by biological research in animal communication as well as neurophysiological evidence. The evolutionary perspective evokes a concept of sound communication not initially constructed for the transformation of abstract information, but rather to make sound expressions affect a perceiver directly. This seems to accord well with the view which perceives proto-linguistic affective communication in the voiced intonations of parent-infant interaction. In alarm calls or auditory mating signals, the meaning of the sound is not conferred by interpretation of abstract symbols on the part of the receiver(s), but the sound is supposed to arouse a certain affect and perhaps cause an expedient action. Given that the sound expression is formed with the explicit intention of bringing about a specific behavior in the receiver, we seem to evoke a negative concept of communication in the sense of manipulation, or indeed, the classical image accorded to rhetoric.

The relationship between music and rhetoric has been a focus of thinking about music since antiquity, as noted by Christensen-Dalsgaard, and rhetorical concepts seem to have played a central role in the structuring of modern musicological discourse. However, linking musical meaning to the prosodic expressiveness of our bodies in the perspective of evolution seems to be a preferable alternative to that of ideas about specific 'Affekten' encoded in specific musical phrases. In this manner, socially encoded expressiveness of musical gestures within a certain historic sensibility would instead be grounded in an intrinsic proto-musical impulse for affective communication in humans. The persuasive nature of our musical minds seems an integral part of human intentional life. If this is so, the evolutionary perspective addresses not only the origins of music, but in doing so perhaps also the origins of meaning.

In their article “Melodic Temporal Pattern and Rhythmic Syllable Pattern of Song Title in Unfamiliar Song”, authors Jeffrey N. Howard and Darcee L. Datteri report research on musical prosody, but from a quite different perspective. Focusing on popular song ‘hooks’, the authors provide evidence for a commonality in perceptual processing of melodic patterns and the prosodic rhythmic syllable pattern of accompanying lyrics (which, by the way, would seem to be in agreement with the discussed evolutionary hypothesis).

Our two remaining articles each focus on the impact of noise in music and musical sounds. Kristoffer Jensen, in “Irregularities, Noise and Random Fluctuations in Musical Sounds”, presents a modelling of how parameters of noise affect perceptual auditory categories. Based on an analysis of random processes in sound, the article offers an account of how noise components can add specific meanings to musical sounds. Torben Sangild in “Noise - Three Musical Gestures” discusses the aesthetic effect of noise on the meaning of musical gestures, developing concepts of ‘expressionist’, ‘introvert’ and ‘minimal’ noise through the analysis of different noisy elements in rock music. Rather than extracting a formal description of perceptual categories from technically manipulated components of noisy sounds, Sangild focuses on noise as a psycho-social disruptive force, in a conceptual dialectics between noise and music.

Since our first appearance, we have had the pleasure of enlarging our Editorial Board with the presence of Director and Senior Lecturer Dr. Kia Ng (ICSRiM, University of Leeds, UK), Resaercher Dr. Sølvi Ystad (LMA, CNRS, Marseille, France), Director of Research Dr. Richard Kronland-Martinet (LMA, CNRS, Marseille, France), Prof. Dr. Michael Krausz (Department of Philosophy, Bryn Mawr College, USA), Senior Lecturer Dr. Barry Eaglestone (Department of Information Studies, University of Sheffield, UK), Assistant Professor Dr. Elaine Chew (USC, IMSC and Viterbi School of Engineering, University of Southern California, USA), and Associate Professor Cand.Mag. Lars Ole Bonde (Department of Music and Music Therapy, University of Aalborg, Denmark). We bid all welcome to our journal and thank our entire editorial board for their effort. We would especially like to give our thanks to the referees, who have put in a great deal of work in reviewing articles for our current issue.

As in our first issue, the present publication includes research reports, book reviews and updates on recent publications pertaining to research on music and meaning, in addition to our peer-reviewed articles. As a new feature we are happy to announce the inclusion of a department entitled “Essays”, which offers a forum for texts by authors who wish to present views on music and meaning which are of interest to the purview of *JMM*, but which are expressed in a more informal, literary or poetic fashion, perhaps, rather than in a traditionally scholarly manner.

We hope you will enjoy the second issue of The Journal of Music and Meaning.

Jens Hjortkjær

With best regards,

Cynthia M. Grund, Editor-in-Chief  
Kasper Eskelund, Managing Editor  
Jens Hjortkjær, Member of Editorial Staff  
Mikael Aktor, Webmaster