***A Taxonomy of Listening: A Repertoire for Imaginative Auditory Play.***

***Structure and Pattern Listening*:** Here the listener focuses on the formal intrinsic elements of music: counterpoint, structure, movements, music theory in practice. There is an appreciation of structures, pattern and order related to compositional intention. This highly informed listening also appreciates the ‘rules and conventions of the game’ and takes delight in departure from them in terms of added complexity, asymmetries and novelty. Here the trained ‘ear’ is able to engage in contrapuntal and polyphonic listening. These are ‘syntactic’ listening strategies (Smith, 1987) and linked to ‘patterned formalism’ (Kivy,1990).

***Programmed listening:*** Here the listener is highly informed, literally by Program Notes, but also by background knowledge. Focus moves from the assessment of the way the performance realises the assumed composer’s intentions to the interpretive skills of conductor and players who realise it (Kramer, 2011). Focus is bounded by the sense of the integrity of the whole ‘work’ (Goehr, 1992) which stands as an independent art-work (Zangwill, 2007). This approach and the previous one exemplify ‘objective analytic’ listening strategies (Hargreaves & Coleman, 1981).

***Listening through*** ***Identification:*** Here there is a focus on visuality and performance, especially identification and particularly the conductor’s movement and gesture, the ‘subject position’, interpretive perspective, that the conductor invites the listeners to take. This listening strategy also includes focus on particular performers or instruments. This strategy places weight on participation and the ‘eventness’ of the performance.

***Sentient Listening***: The listener here allows him/herself to be immersed in the musical sound, letting the sound and music ‘wash over‘ them. The listeners allow themselves to be stimulated, ‘played with’; permissive and submissive, but not passive; there is pleasure in ‘raw feels’. An awareness and interest in embodied mood may arise. This is ‘arousal’ though listening (Berlyne, 1971).

***Referential and Reflexive Listening*** : Here the listening strategy is to enable: sentient listening, by certain practices, for example ‘intentional unintentionality’ (Humphrey & Laidlaw, 1994), breathing, posture, ‘centering down’; and also to enable emergent substantive reference – a reflexive sense of ones ‘self’ as a resonant listener (Nancy, 2007), and reference to what arises in ‘free association’. This approach goes ‘where the music takes you’ in both idle and knowing modes. The listener comes to notice the reverie, daydream, shapes, colours, contours, the visualised landscape, the sense of a narrative, being ‘transported’, being elsewhere, being on a journey, being ‘lost’ and ‘found’, that emerges in their listening. This exemplifies ‘affective listening’ (Hargreaves and Coleman, 1981) and ‘emotional and referential listening’ (Smith, 1987).

***Listening as Hearing.*** Here the listener approaches a known piece of music with a high degree of foreknowledge which is folded into the particular performance, critically or uncritically, for pleasure or comparison.

***Ritual Participatory Listening:*** This listening strategy depends on mutuality:listening with other auditors as a social system and within a listening habitus Bourdieu, 1990). Auditors are aware of a ‘being-there-eventness’, and are ritualising and performative actors, ‘composing’ themselves; keeping silent, still and holding the performance space. Knowing preparation in the context of co-presence. Making explicit and constituting the listening habitus

***Gestalt Play* :** Knowing and wandering, but focal, attention to patterns and specific elements such as harmony, rhythm/tempo/pulse/timbre,mood and melody that are also allowed to move in and out of focus and combine.

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*Magic/Wonder Play*: Being struck, moments of glory, the rare expanding present, or even presence of the holistic. transcendence Related in certain circumstances to theopoesis.

Play[[1]](#footnote-1) is therefore constructed and performed in an embodied way by the listener in moving between, and combining, these modes. I will set out a further theory underlying this framework from Developmental Psychology drawn from the work of Harris, 2000) below. As I develop, using the work of Spitzer, a further framework for thinking about the hermeneutics of aesthetic discourse about music, I will also note that this non-metaphorical, real play gives rise, through the work of the listening

1. 10. Space does not permit here a detailed discussion of the value of the ‘open concept’ *play* to listening but see: Garvey, C. (1990). *Play*. Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, Huizinga, J. (1955). *Homo Ludens; A Study of the Play-Element in Culture*. Boston, Beacon Press, Piaget, Jean (1962). *Play, dreams and imitation* (VOLUME 24). New York: Norton. Nachmanovitch, Stephen, *Free Play: Improvisation in Life and Art*. Tarcher/Penguin 1990, and particularly Harris (2000) op cit. [↑](#footnote-ref-1)