

# Becoming-Still: Perspectives on Musical Ontology after Deleuze and Guattari

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In the present essay, I apply various concepts associated with the thought of Gilles Deleuze and Félix Guattari to an inquiry concerning what I call the ‘ontology’ of musical creation and performance. Specifically, I utilize both the theory and approach of ‘schizoanalysis’, which so pervasively marks co-operative works such as *Anti-Oedipus* and *A Thousand Plateaus*. Deleuze and Guattari’s schizoid becomes the model for my musician-performer. This ‘schizoid musician’ is the one who has the ability to apprehend that of a ‘musical space’, a central theme of the essay.

Some additional clarification is needed as well. Although I surely offer this essay to the reader as a thoroughly honest, and hopefully provocative, attempt, it is also something of an indebted experiment. That is, the ‘after’ of my essay’s title—as in ‘*after* Deleuze and Guattari’—has essentially two meanings. The first, and obvious meaning: I write *after* Deleuze and Guattari in that I inherit, to whatever extent, their thought. I grapple with their ideas. The second, and perhaps more unconventionally risky (because potentially easily misconstrued as representative of a kind of blind fidelity): I write *after* Deleuze and Guattari in the way that a painter paints ‘after’ another painter, in the way that a composer composes ‘after’ another composer, and so on. In one sense, the selective utilization of a sensibility associated with the schizophrenic condition provided the ‘silent partner’ and underlying guiding influence for *Anti-Oedipus* and *A Thousand Plateaus*. Thus, this essay is, in part, a modest attempt at yet another ‘fold’ (to use a term of Deleuze’s) in a philosophical inquiry—some kind theoretical exemplar of ‘difference and repetition’ (or, difference *in* repetition). This indebtedness notwithstanding, the reader will notice the scholarly utilization of Deleuze and Guattari also in terms of a silent partner, a guiding influence, and less in terms of a source that is explicitly acknowledged or referenced. This was an intentional part of the experiment from the beginning. Of course, other thinkers, on the other hand, *will* come to occupy such a space in the essay.

Finally, Deleuze and Guattari believed that one of the chief goals of philosophy was the creation of concepts. In this experiment, I attempt to materialize this idea by articulating an original inquiry that entails both the creation of my own concepts and a stylistic indebtedness to these theorists. No doubt, I was also greatly motivated by the fact that Deleuze and Guattari never gave too much attention to music (despite some intriguing aspects that they attributed to it), and thus there are few

commentaries addressing the ramifications of their thought with respect to music (a notable exception being Ian Buchanan's (1997) piece 'Deleuze and Popular Music', published in this very journal). Deleuze and Guattari did, however, speak of music as the most 'deterritorializing' of the arts, and their thought always struck me as profoundly applicable to matters concerning music.

### **Musical Space, Making-Music, and Becoming-Music**

A child in the dark, gripped with fear, comforts himself by singing under his breath. He walks and halts to his song. Lost, he takes shelter, or orients himself with his little song as best he can. The song is like a rough sketch of a calming and stabilizing, calm and stable, center in the heart of chaos. Perhaps the child skips as he sings, hastens or slows his pace. But the song itself is already a skip: it jumps from chaos to the beginnings of order in chaos and is in danger of breaking apart at any moment. (Deleuze & Guattari 1987: 311)

We differentiate, for the purposes of theoretical explication, but with an ear attuned to any praxeological ramifications, between the *musical space* and *making-music*. Musical space is better initially apprehended as a kind of fluid paradigm rather than as a totality. With all the technical implements, imaginative intuitions, and methodological strategies, the performer is situated within a musical space. There is not yet any ambition, any intention, here—only an as yet open territory of possibility. But in a musical space this territory is agitated. The performer simply finds himself/herself *there*: will he/she be trapped or will he/she be still? To an extent, this very question involves a tension within making-music. Making-music—like the 'I', the cogito, the transcendental subject, the abstract individual—is riddled with fear, preoccupied with intention, consumed with context. It must, in turn, either psychologize itself into a motivation toward aesthetic value structures or become dissolved, albeit with discontinuous agitations, into a smooth surface—that is, releasing into, surrendering to, being seduced by the moment of the musical space. Musical space *as* the becoming of music. Will the performer be ambitious or will he/she *become* ... ?

Starting from the forms one has, the subject one is, the organs one has, or the functions one fulfills, becoming is to extract particles between which one establishes the relations of movement and rest, speed and slowness that are closest to that which one is becoming, and through which one becomes. (Deleuze & Guattari 1987: 272)

Becoming-music is defined by what might loosely be called a phenomenological trajectory from making-music to the musical space, but this trajectory operates as a *break*. Making-music gives itself ecstatically over to the musical space. There is, indeed, a momentary sense of emptiness here or, better yet, of numbness, but it is perhaps better described as a *fullness-to-explosion*. Fullness-to-explosion is precisely the confrontation between the totality of historied having-to-do-with-music strata—that is, what *can* be the cumbersome weight of whatever contexts of knowledge,

expectation, genre, theory (henceforth constituting what I will call the *savoir* of music) are allowed to dominate the given musical experience—and the paradigm of the musical space—that is, most generally, that which constitutes a sense of *thereness*, of taking part in something, of being ‘along for the ride’. The implication of the musical space is not so much that of a beginning and an end, from this point to that point, from time *x* to time *y*. It does not suggest something that is ordered, or structured, although it may—perhaps must—entail certain ordering and structuring processes.

One opens the circle not on the side where the old forces of chaos press against it but in another region, one created by the circle itself. (Deleuze & Guattari 1987: 311)

There is some truth to an adage among some musicians that one learns everything about music, about music-making, in order to ‘unlearn’ it. *Full trajectory*: If the aforementioned trajectory from making-music to the music space were ‘full’, it would mark the performer attempting to remember all that he/she has learned, to utilize efficient memory instead of desirous forgetting—*short-term memory, forgetting as a process*—precisely in order to ‘create’ a musical space. *Empty trajectory*: With the same result, if the aforementioned trajectory from making-music to the musical space were ‘empty’, it would mark the performer feeling as though he/she has not learned enough. ‘Becoming is an antimemory’ (Deleuze & Guattari 1987: 294). But is there a reverse trajectory—that is, from a musical space to making-music? In one sense, it would simply be the depletion of what we have described thus far. The musical space would be in some way questioned as to its fullness, or emptiness, reterritorialized in order to ‘make *this* music’. Thus, the totality of historied having-to-do-with-music strata resurfaces in some form, and the performer objectifies the musical space in order to ‘make’ music. Then, the musical space exists merely as an opportunity for making-music. Now, superficially, this is true—that is, spoken casually, ‘musical space’ does have the connotation of something created beforehand, for example, via categorization (jazz, Indian, pop, classical, country, Turkish, world), via instrumentation (drum, guitar, oud, cello, sarod, flute, zither), and its configuration (duo, trio, quartet, quintet, 10-tet, 25-tet, an orchestra), via venue (club, concert hall, basement, coffeehouse, park, auditorium, restaurant), and audience, expected or presently gathered (younger, yuppies, college students, older, businesspersons, colleagues, or no one at all). It would be said that all of these ‘contribute’ to the actual performance; and that the performer especially is well aware of them. However, these might better be described as a way of making-music ‘outside’ of the making-music in the performance. They constitute the discourses and social conditions of music as an historical entity. Indeed, we make most of our music outside of picking up any instruments. We talk about music. We categorize music. We situate music. But we often do so to the extent that music is demeaned in some way, prostituted, even lost.

Now, a quite natural and understandable objection inevitably arises. That is, what is being presented here appears to be radically acontextual and ahistorical, resulting in what might readily be designated a kind of romanticism, a naïve aestheticism

even. Initially, an all-too-easy response to this objection might cloak itself in the protection of a ‘bracketing’ phenomenology, which would seek to isolate the thing-in-itself, the experience *as is*, away from the kind of strata of knowledge and expectation that has thus far been attributed in some way to a preoccupation with the history of music. However, although a certain phenomenological sensibility does, indeed, inform this essay, it would not feign such a convenient excuse. No doubt the concept of the musical space does, to some extent, *assume*—and at its own peril—the influence of history and the very fact of music’s historical and social situatedness. And yet, the musical space is *consumed* by this situatedness, to the point, once again, of a fullness-to-explosion—that is, of a necessary ‘letting go’, not in order to deny history, but precisely in order to *become* history, to assert itself freely as an event. We might say that the event of the musical space is actively historical, but not passively ‘in’ history. It is neither an object of study nor fodder for historical periodization, but a fluid dimension consumed with its own immediacy. Thus is the musical space opposed to the kind of false deference to history, in which music becomes so ubiquitous in our social and cultural experience so as to lose any intimate and communal meaning. Here, we could say that one need not play music in order to *play at* making music. Thus, in the case of music the discourses and social conditions coincide with how we imagine it to participate culturally and how we imagine our cultures to participate in it. To clarify: surely we cannot escape our discourses and our imagination, nor should we escape them. But here too there is a break—lessons unlearned. Expectations of music will never be completely fulfilled. It is a matter of gradations, of the intensity of such expectations. So, within a somewhat superficial field, our playing-at-making-music is, indeed, a kind of superficial ‘musical space’, a *savoir* of music. Of course, there are other intensities present in a performance.

### **Intensities, Improvisation**

What *is* this music? What genre does it exhibit? What techniques are being utilized? What ‘styles’ are being demonstrated? These questions are demonstrative of intensities of expectation. However, the suggestion that they will never be completely fulfilled entails precisely that they will be uprooted, then left, or changed—which is to say, deterritorialized: intensities of expectation becoming performance intensities. Once again, there is no ‘outlook’ for these intensities, and certainly no judgment. There is no outlook, that is, of intensities of expectation affecting the performance ‘negatively’ or ‘positively’. For it is only by way of an *event* that they affect the musical space at all. There is no judgment, that is, of the performance being ‘bad’ or ‘good’ from having been affected by intensities of expectation. For if we wonder at this we are simply playing at music, resisting the musical space. Fair enough. But what of a recording? This would seem to present a slightly different problematic.

... Varèse, yes, metallic and strident, calling for the instruments of our ‘actuality’. (Deleuze 1995: 118)

In the explication immediately following, the choice of Varèse's (1991) *Amériques* is, to a great extent, is an arbitrary one. This is to say, the discussion with respect to recording, performance, improvisation, and so on, is meant (as will become clear) to apply to *any* conceivable musical space. However, as the previous quote suggests, Varèse would be an exemplar of the challenge issued forth by the notion of the musical space.

Certainly it could be argued that, although one *performance* of Edgar Varèse's *Amériques* will nevertheless be different from the next, that one performance of *Amériques* that is 'captured' by a *recording* is available to us again and again as the 'same' performance, not just the same notes, but the same attacks, the same inflections, the same rhythmic and temporal milieu. The problem with this example, as an objection to what we have said about performance, is that in order to make it an objection one must paradoxically deny somewhat the musical space of *this* performance of *Amériques*, looking instead to the *savoir* inevitably built-up around this recording's performance, and the piece itself. We tend to rely too much upon what 'grows' on us as 'moments' of the performance we do or do not enjoy. We rely upon things about which we are value-neutral, but which we can nevertheless anticipate again and again, whenever we slip this recording, this 'immortalization' of *Amériques* into our player. Still, we somehow cheat the musical space *Amériques* creates—thus cheating our own experience of it *each* time—by letting its immortalization collapse *solely* into the *savoir* built so readily around it. Actually, we make *Amériques* an arborescent structure, a totality. We root it in a hierarchy of moments. We essentialize it in a recording. We stop listening to it. Our expectational intensities have been, if not completely fulfilled, directed toward 'what I will hear', generally, and 'what will happen *here*', specifically, in the music. In a recording, even more so than in a performance, the intensities of a performance require more deterritorializing impetus. In a performance, our expectational intensities are more and more transformed by intensities of performance simply by the musical space in which we find ourselves, in so far as there is fullness-to-explosion. With a recording, however, intensities, even expectational ones, have the tendency to become increasingly rooted, as we have suggested, as we come to 'learn' the recording. In a performance, we *are* inevitably deterritorialized, at least initially, at whatever gradation our intensities of expectation at the onset—that is, what we 'bring' to the occasion. In a recording, however, we are inevitably handed a reterritorializing card. Recording is a recoding. With a recording, there is a tendency to not only recodify the music, but to recodify ourselves in the process. If we can acknowledge that each time we listen to this particular recorded performance of Varèse's *Amériques* the music, through whatever intensities and discoveries enthusing us, is *not* the same, *not* phenomenologically-in-itself, *not* the sum of its sounds (in essence, potentially decoding), then the same must be true for ourselves. We bring the difference and singularity of our lives to the operating table each and every time we experience even that same (i.e. recorded) performance of *Amériques*. This speaks of us more generally that we experience *any* music at every turn improvisationally. Moreover, it confirms that music is essentially deterritorializing.

Now, we will still look to the *savoir* surrounding Varèse's piece and find that the methods, techniques, and approaches involved are not at all 'improvisational', as they are in improvisational jazz, for example. However, what are these methods, techniques, and approaches but precisely that which constitute the *savoir* built-up around Varèse's *Amériques*? Indeed, it should strike us as odd that such aspects of certain types of music have stood as the primary criteria informing why various Western cultural élites have criticized improvisational jazz, for example, which is said to lack these aspects. This music is, to put it simply, not as 'serious' a music. But surely this warrants some challenge.

First of all, if it is to be acknowledged *in the slightest* that improvisational jazz *does* implement methods, techniques, and approaches, only perhaps not necessarily the same ones as Western classical music, then the challenge is based on an arbitrary distinction regarding what aspects constitute seriousness. More profound, however, is the fact that, even here, we can only make the claim against *Amériques-as-improvisation* from outside the musical space created by the music, outside of the endlessly different musical spaces created every time we experience the music: the difference of repetition, the decoding of the recording.

Now, it would indeed seem absurd to even entertain an argument that entailed presumptions such as the following: (1) *Amériques* is a *composed* piece; (2) the players read from a *score*; and (3) there is no *interpretation* involved. Therefore, *Amériques* cannot be conceived of as improvisation. We might be irritated by the tediousness of what would be the painful obviousness of our rebuttal with respect to interpretation, for instance: No interpretation? Would we actually have the audacity to assert that there is an 'original' version of the Varèse piece? What is this original? The score? Whose scoring of it? Varèse's own? The Boosey and Hawkes' printing of it? A particular recording perhaps? Whose performance of it? The Ensemble Modern conducted by Ingo Metzmacher? The Ensemble Intercontemporain conducted by Pierre Boulez? You get the idea. Still, although it most probably *would* be a simplistic exercise in futility to spend too much time on such matters, it must be acknowledged that even contemporary discourses of aesthetic formalism, for example, cling to such a conception of composition versus that of improvisation. Indeed, it is actually what I take to be my more traditional and broad usage of the term 'ontology'—as entailing precisely a somewhat phenomenological concern with the 'being', or experience, of music, its felt impact, broadly construed—which most aesthetic formalists today eschew in favor of a continued emphasis on 'works' (of art) as forming the basis for ontological inquiry. In this context, it perhaps becomes not so naïve to nevertheless address the albeit painful obviousness of the matter of the 'score', another example often enlisted in inquiries concerning musical ontology, composition, and improvisation.

What after all *is* a score? If we insist on asking the question this way, we run into some interesting, but ultimately futile, discussion, trying to negotiate the balance between the real and the virtual, the sound and the image, the action and the symbol. We forget that a musical space strikes us as *already* virtual reality, as sound-image, as symbolic action. So, instead, we might ask the question, '*How* after all *goes* a score?'. We can discover this only by playing it. To paraphrase something

I once heard attributed to Miles Davis: ‘I’ll play it first and tell you what it is later’. A score is not a way to ‘create’ a musical space. *Playing* a score *is* a musical space. Simply apprehending a score implies an arborescence—a rooting, a grounding, of music in that score. A musical space, however, implies a nomadism—an openness, an explosion, of playing. Alas, we do more than ‘interpret’ a score; we *experiment* with it, from it. When we come to the ‘composed’ elements, then, we see yet again a break—a break in methods, techniques, and approaches:

1. From (the creative motivation of the) composer to (the release of creativity in the writing of the) composition—an *urge-writing improvisation*.
2. From (the written, communicative notation of the) score to (the intuition and interpretive capacity of the) performer—a *symbolic-interpretive improvisation*.
3. From (the audible creative musicality produced by the) performer to the air, to the world—a *sound-release improvisation*.

One launches forth, hazards an improvisation. But to improvise is to join with the World, or meld with it. One ventures from home on the thread of a tune. (Deleuze & Guattari 1987: 311)

Now, the question of how and when these operations occur is a question for every musical space, occurring with different multiplicities of intensities, with different interest, within different capacities and contexts. Choosing to compose one note against another—indeed, to compose one note instead of no note—is to make an improvisational choice. Choosing to play just-so soft when you see ‘*pp*’ written in a score is to make an improvisational choice. But here still we must speak of the gradations of experiencing a musical space, of gradations with respect to the *ways* of improvising a musical space.

As it turns out, that which we say of the performer is to be said of the listener, is to be said of the composer, and so on. I say ‘spectrum-modes’ to emphasize the praxeological anarchy of these various lines of flight to and from music—that is, the ways of apprehending, understanding, situating it. By ‘spectrum’ I mean precisely all the possible ways in which we imagine music to be experienced. By ‘modes’ I mean the very roles that may be adopted in that experience—that is, performer, listener, composer, reader, and so on. For we are tempted by the *savoir* of music in which we are situated to apprehend these as more and more specialized, as broader to thinner, as larger to smaller, when in fact they all negotiate their own spectrum, which may or may not involve these types of trajectories. Experiencing-improvising music *is* playing it, *is* listening in it, *is* composing it, *is* thinking it, *is* reading it.

### **Schizophrenic Musician, Paranoid Musician**

As musicians—performers, composers, listeners—we are at any point engaged in any or all of the aforementioned spectrum-modes. But it would be significant, of course, if we were to say essentially the opposite—that is, that we are merely one of these spectrum-modes, or none of them at all.

The former marks the *schizoid* musician. Albeit with intensities that always have the potential to be oriented toward a certain spectrum-mode at the expense of any others, he/she nevertheless extends outward from the musical space in which he/she has been (de)territorialized, uprooted, made vulnerable from the first breath of playing. He/she extends his/her ear outward to listen in the musical space, an ear swallowed by the musical space. He/she extends his/her lips and limbs, his/her bowels and groin, outward to play in the musical space, a playing situated in the musical space, as it is given force by it. He/she extends his/her hand-brain (for it is more apt to acknowledge the simultaneity and symbiosis of these appendages and organs with a fuller concept) outward to compose on a blank page, a page that acts like a fetish. He/she extends his/her sound-thoughts (yet another pairing of simultaneity and symbiosis) outward to think in the musical space.

However, the initial, 'given', (de)territorialization is not at all enough for the schizoid musician. Although it was in resisting the reterritorializing strains possible in any musical space that he/she extended outward to become any number of spectrum-modes (e.g. as performer-becoming-listener, as listener-becoming-thinker, as thinker-becoming-composer, as composer-becoming-performer), the schizoid musician ultimately stretches to extend so far outward as to touch the impossible, to be, if we might take the cliché more to heart, 'lost' in the music. Their desire for a completely smooth, flattened, musical space *from which he/she would be all but indistinguishable* is so positive that he/she will risk himself/herself again and again, becoming-music to the point of stillness. Somehow, like the musical space in which he/she finds himself/herself simply by playing, this stillness toward which he/she ultimately extends himself/herself seems inexorably attached to her desire, presenced simply by his/her desiring. He/she desires to extend so far that she would even defy extension: 'spatium not extension, Zero intensity as principle of production' (Deleuze & Guattari 1987: 164).

The *paranoid* musician, on the other hand, is desperately preoccupied with isolating, or obliterating, spectrum-modes. Albeit with expectational intensities that could just as easily become performance intensities, he/she nevertheless retracts his/her ear inward to listen for the music-making, an ear straining to listen for 'things' in the music. He/she retracts his/her lips and limbs, his/her bowels and groin, inward to play at music-making, a playing-at situated outside the musical space, as it attempts with such defeated precision to force the music, to create it. He/she retracts his/her hand-brain inward to control the musical space by composing on a blank page, a page he/she imagines already written, already played, already heard—a page that is truly blank. He/she retracts his/her sound-thoughts inward to think about music, to play at the having-to-do-with-music, to trace his/her knowledge: "The map has to do with performance, whereas tracing always involves an alleged "competence" ' (Deleuze & Guattari 1987: 12–13). The paranoid musician is the one who consistently looks to the *savoir* of music, who consistently describes music in terms of methods, techniques, and approaches, who consistently asks, 'Did you hear *this* in the music?' or 'How will I play *this* type of music?' Hear it. Play it. There is always time for discourse—indeed, discourse is unavoidable. In fact, even a multiplicity of performance intensities could be said to activate discourses, and



somehow, as we have suggested, the *savoir* of music can slip into even the smoothest, flattest, musical space imaginable.

So it is that, indeed, the distinction between the schizoid and the paranoid musician cannot be too overdrawn. Music presents itself to us as simply, and unintentionally, productive, not dialectical (at least in the sense of harboring opposition or contradiction)—as producing certain tendencies and intensities. Here, what might be called music's 'hyper' state *is* synonymous with music's 'natural', albeit precarious, state in the culture of late capitalism. This is to say, once again, that music presents an ebb and flow of these polar tendencies, which breed their own intensities. As musicians, in the broadest sense, we then cultivate our place in the musical horizon. The inevitable problematic arrives at the threshold of this cultivation. Crucially, and somewhat paradoxically, however, what marks the schizoid musician is precisely the tendency to, at once, allow music's own cultivation to take place before his/her own cultivation *and* to open up freely to what might happen: the schizoid musician as 'hyper-musician'.

Now, it is certainly the case that many musicians and composers have articulated this presented idea in terms of a dismantling of the 'ego', as well as of intentionality. By allowing ourselves to be 'vessels', or 'channels' (as it is often described), of the music, we give way for the music to assert itself, to assert its own laws, so to speak. As an aesthetic approach, this has often been touted as a kind of objectivism, which exploits art's more 'plastic' and transparent qualities. John Cage's music comes to mind, especially with its emphasis on 'pure' sounds, 'indeterminacy', and 'chance operations' (for which he utilized the *I Ching*). But in perhaps a more subtle way—although operatively quite different from Cage's music—Arnold Schoenberg's serialism also comes to mind, especially in its creation of a 'total' system of music, which sought to give the music itself a seemingly endless array of permutations based on a fairly limited and incisive compositional methodology. Not surprisingly, both Cage and Schoenberg (and perhaps their followers to an even greater extent—Boulez, a champion of serialism, especially) would speak somewhat uneasily, at the very least, about improvisation. Improvisation, it would be argued, is the antithesis of this objectivism; it posits the musician before the music, intention before chance, ego before no ego.

No doubt this discursive field would yield some interesting and creative debate—perhaps better suited for further inquiry in another study. For the purposes of this essay, however, some key concerns can be articulated.

On the one hand, it could readily be argued that both Cage's indeterminacy and Schoenberg's serialism actually represent the egoistic and intentional artistic act *par excellence*. That is, surely we can acknowledge the simple fact that, even before the music can assert itself freely, and before the musicians even play the first note of music, there is arguably the grandest of any acts of ego and intention, and of course, the grandest of any agent: *the composer composing*. Here, we cannot help but think of the extreme version of this line of thought, as demonstrated by that strictest of all formalists, Eduard Hanslick (1986), who, indeed, wished for the musician to be a vessel for the music, but more as a kind of automaton musician who simply took the

perfect dictation of a music that was handed down to them by the supreme creative genius of the composer.

On the other hand, improvisation is not necessarily saddled with this kind of grand egoism or intention. Although it is true that, in most cases, more individual freedom and interpretation *is* given in improvisation, it is often a kind of reflexivity with the music itself as it is unfolding that dominates improvisation, that dominates the musician's activity in improvisation.

The aim of this essay, however, is not to argue ultimately for or against various composed or improvised musics in terms of whatever degree of ego, intention, value, or authenticity they possess or lack in relation to the idea of the musical space. What has been said about improvisation, about experiencing–improvising music, about listening improvisationally and so on, does not necessarily constitute any preference or argument for the broad musical idiom we know as improvisation. On the contrary, the postulation of improvisation in relation to that of a musical space is intended to be both more inclusive and expansive than any preoccupation with particular idioms, approaches, or role designations would allow. The objectivist stance will never compose itself out of all traces of subjectivism. The albeit honorable rallying cry of 'Jazz is Freedom', or what the British improviser Derek Bailey (1992, xi–xii) calls 'non-idiomatic' improvisation, still cannot escape what could be called the faintly objective nature of a musical space, whether this entails a kind of 'immediate composing' or simply the mystery and unpredictability of the musical space.

Ultimately, we take heed of various contemporary interventions—from critical theory to poststructuralism to postmodernism—that have, at the very least, made the issue of subjective/objective duality a problematic one. Thus, the problematization of our two different musicians is stated with respect to these discursive spaces concerning subjectivity: the paranoid musician as cultivating, relying upon, the identity of the subject, the 'I'; the schizoid/hyper-musician as cultivating the difference of the subject *as subjectivated*, the 'I' and the Other—and thus, the multiple. Derrida paves the way with his corrective concerning Husserl: the 'I' cannot be realized for the musician, cannot be the object of a 'here-and-now', precisely because even the musician who plays alone *posits* the 'I' as an ideality: 'the preservation or mastery of presence in repetition. In its pure form, this presence is the presence of nothing *existing* in the world; it is a correlation with the acts of repetition, themselves ideal' (Derrida 1973: 9–10). This also implies that the 'I' can function in the absence of the musician. Making-music attempts to fill this absence. The transcendental ego of Husserl marks the paranoid musician. A musical space, however, *is* full of absences.

Finally, the schizoid musician—like the *avant-garde* artist, the surrealist, who forces the confrontation between art-as-institution and art-as-life praxis—has some desire, enough so that he/she may let go, parody, transform, deterritorialize the *savoir*, sabotage the discourse. It is the opposite with the paranoid musician. He/she uses discourse to sabotage the musical space, uses the *savoir* to reterritorialize performance intensities into expectational ones, attempts to form a musical space by

making-music, attempts to redirect subversions, attempts to grab onto a territory. But

there is a territory precisely when milieu components *cease to be directional, becoming dimensional instead*, when they cease to be functional to become expressive. There is a territory when the rhythm has expressiveness. (Deleuze & Guattari 1987: 315; emphasis added)

### **Singularity, Sensation, Multiplicity**

The generative activity of a musical space is precisely such that there is a sense of singularities (i.e. events occurring at an extremely localized, immediate level) that *just were* and singularities that are *not just yet*. Our schizoid musician ‘gets on the train’ of these singularities, blowing them up into sustained intensities.

... as the work develops, the motifs increasingly enter into conjunction, conquer *their own plane*, become autonomous from the dramatic action, impulses, and situations ... (Deleuze & Guattari 1987: 319)

A tone, for example, is not only generative in that it always stands in relation to other tones, or groupings of tones, which move through the musical space, but because its duration, attack, and inflection propel that tone and other tones forward. A tone is not a note, or, a tone is not merely a note, or, a tone is a more subtle, profound, acute quality of a note (either of these could suffice). For we are tempted to describe tones the same way in which we describe notes. Indeed, ‘duration’, ‘attack’, and ‘inflection’ are all terms that have meaning with respect to directives for making-music—that is, how to play that note, how to listen to that note, how to compose that note and so on. But notes remain functional. Even beyond their ultimately arbitrary designations (‘C#’, ‘F’, ‘Gb’, ‘B’), they can exist only in the having-to-do-with-music, only in the discourses of music, only with respect to the *savoir* of music. Notes thrown into a multiplicity of performance intensities—whether played or read from a score—inevitably lose their functionality and become dissolved into the musical space, disseminated into the performative territory, arousing perhaps newer ‘functions’ that, far from being grounding attributes, are immanently deterritorializing. They become *affective*. They become tones. Moreover, this becoming does not express a one-to-one relation: *a* note does not become *a* tone, but is already a multiplicity of tones. (Even if we choose to insist on apprehending music in terms of notes, we find that *a* note is of course experienced differently depending on where, how, why, on what, from what, through what, it is played.) If notes are to constitute the ‘material’ of making-music, tones constitute the *sensations* felt within a musical space.

Every sensation is a question, even if the only answer is silence. (Deleuze & Guattari 1994: 196)

So, not only notes, but all methods, techniques, and approaches brought to a musical space become sensation in some way, become multiplicities of sensations.

Now, for the sake of our theoretical explication, could we say that these sensations are essentially singularities, or, more commonly, that they constitute ‘moments’? Well, first of all, we know that an analogous relationship between notes and intensities would be incorrect, though tempting. In some sense notes and intensities are not only *categorically* contrasting—the former *savoiric*, the latter performative—but *functionally* contrasting. The former are ‘broken down’ into tones, whereas the latter are ‘built up’ from singularities. But we might also say, not without some hesitation though, that sensations are both more pervasive and more acute than singularities: for whereas singularities mark a more present-at-hand, active becoming, sensations mark a passive becoming, underlying our experience. Active becoming of singularities: the circulation of desiring-music. Passive becoming of sensations: the blood of desiring-music.

Meanwhile, we return to ‘getting on the train’. It must be remembered that although a train is ‘confined’ to a track, a pattern, a direction, it nevertheless moves ahead. The trajectory of the train moves *through* the instantaneously changing content of the world. Notes, tones, sounds, utterances, cries, breaths move *through* the musical space that is, at every moment, becoming. Although there is an effort to expand a singular occurrence (‘getting on the train’), to convert it, to approach it as a Cubist would, from every which way, the *rhythmic-horizontal* (think of the pulsating forward movement of rhythm cutting through a musical space) plane upon which that occurrence is resituated nevertheless moves through an invariably changing *chaotic-vertical* (think of a kind of porous barrier, fluid, unpredictable, and yet receptive) plane. We may call these the two planar tendencies within the overall plane of the musical space. The musical space becomes surreal, the result being exemplary of a meeting between chance and necessity (*le hazard objectif*).

### **Protention, Retention, Repetition**

What chaos and rhythm have in common is the in-between—between two milieus, rhythm-cosmos or the chaosmos... In this in-between, chaos becomes rhythm, not inexorably, but it has a chance to. (Deleuze & Guattari 1987: 313)

Ultimately, there is, once again, involved at any point in a musical space a ‘horizon’ of sorts, perhaps of the kind envisioned by phenomenology, with the Husserlian emphasis on *retention* on one end and the Heideggerian emphasis on *protention* on the other end. Schizophrenic music is, in a sense, the ecstatic becoming in-between these ends. The flattened stillness of the musical space mentioned earlier is approached the more and more agitated this ecstasy becomes. It is true that Husserl approached this ecstasy. The deferral toward retention comes only after the articulation of a problematic concerning retention *and* protention, in which Husserl confusingly attempts to assimilate both tendencies in a theorization of a present perception, while simultaneously relying implicitly upon some trace of non-perception. Derrida makes the trace explicit:

One then sees quickly that the presence of the perceived present can appear as such only inasmuch as it is *continuously compounded* with a nonpresence and nonperception, with primary memory and expectation (retention and protention). These nonperceptions are neither added to, nor do they *occasionally* accompany, the actually perceived now; they are essentially and indispensably involved in its possibility. Husserl admittedly says that retention is still a perception. But this is the absolutely unique case—Husserl never recognized any other—of a perceiving in which the perceived is not a present but a past existing as a modification of the present. (Derrida 1973: 64)

Husserl ultimately dissolves the ecstasy in what can only be seen as the great irony of a transcendental ‘self-presence’, in which memory is articulated as somehow both retention and sameness, identity and non-identity. But this is a kind of philosophical ‘bad faith’, Derrida argues. First, difference is doing a lot of work, and yet it remains a trace: ‘Is not the concept of pure solitude—of the monad in the phenomenological sense—*undermined* by its own origin, by the very condition of its self-presence, that is, by “time”, to be conceived anew on the basis now of difference within auto-affectation?’ (Derrida 1973: 68). Second, ‘the immanence of experience’—which one would imagine to be an expansive field from a phenomenological perspective—is too easily left behind as a trace of the coming transcendental affirmation: ‘Does not this “dialectic”—in every sense of the term and before any speculative subsumption of this concept—open up living to difference, and constitute, in the pure immanence of experience, the *divergence* involved in indicative communication and even in signification in general?’ (Derrida 1973: 69).

Thus, when we return from Husserl to the praxeological ramifications of our schizoid/paranoid spectrum, we are struck by the somewhat paranoid, reterritorializing tendency to fabricate a build-up of intensities from a singular occurrence: the tragedy of Kierkegaard’s ([1843] 1983) protagonist in ‘Repetition’, who sought in vain, and yet with such intention and deliberation, for the repeated experience, whether in the face of a beautiful woman, the joy of uninhibited farce, or simply the sameness of his own personal belongings. His desperation leads him, at one point, to the tragic conclusion (which he ironically describes as being unimportant) that repetition does not exist. Why did he come to this conclusion? In part, because, like the paranoid musician, he wanted to *force* repetition. In our case, the fabrication would seem to be exemplary of making-music, of desperately looking to the having-to-do-with-music, of trying to create a musical space, or at least create a ‘moment’ in a musical space. For in order to engage this one must step away from the musical space and toward making-music. Alas, our suspicions are not unfounded: reterritorialization *will* inevitably happen in performance. Points of convergence will be contrived at times. However, from what has been said about the meeting of rhythmic-horizontals and chaotic-verticals, we find that there is the stubborn deterritorializing tendency of a musical space that forces any attempt at making-music into a multiplicity of performance intensities. We may say that it forces a *line*.

A line of becoming is not defined by the points that it connects, or by the points that compose it; on the contrary, it passes between points, it comes up through the middle, it runs perpendicular to the points first perceived, transversally to the localizable relation to distant or contiguous points. (Deleuze & Guattari 1987: 293)

In a musical space there is no intention, only retention, protention, ecstasy. A truly depleted paranoid making-music, whether in performance or not, would involve merely retention, or, at the other extreme, a seamless yet routine protention, felt as moving through time statically, with no stops and starts, ebbs and flows. Even repetition, firmly placed in the *savoir* of various types of music, whether more or less manifest (more in the minimalism and ‘phase’ music of Terry Riley and Steve Reich, for example; less in most improvisational jazz), and *seemingly* based on retention, is nevertheless made sheer difference precisely by its protention. In repetition, a protention-diagonal cuts through and across our rhythmic-horizontal and chaotic-vertical graph.

Indeed, the antagonism between repetition and time, between repetition and becoming, marks the sheer difference in repetition. An example of what Eugene Holland (1999: 25) describes as a ‘*materialist ontology of repetition*’: the balalaika player who approaches something ecstatic by effortlessly repeating that one note in the context of a flowing, almost rubatoesque, melodicism. ‘Difference instead of similarity prevails’ (Holland 1999: 25); but even further, the exact *sameness*, not merely ‘similarity’, of the balalaika player’s repeated note is still thrust into difference. Indeed, he/she approaches the smooth surface of a musical space, perhaps even more differentiated in this case for the fact that, unlike an instrument with a natural sustaining mechanism, or even a stringed instrument with a bow, a note on the balalaika is sustained *only* by repeated attacks. So, one is ‘aware’ of the repetitions, the repeated attacks, while becoming increasingly ‘unaware’ of them over time. Repetition is a paradoxical breeding ground of sorts. On the one hand, when engaged in a musical space it is present so unabashedly that it easily risks reterritorialization; it can be sustained, or ‘taken up’ again and again, for effect, for recognizability, for usefulness. On the other hand, when engaged in a musical space, it forever deterritorializes, cutting abruptly through the heart of the chaos while simultaneously retaining the chaotic flows—a sudden shift barely felt.

Repetition is truly that which disguises itself in constituting itself, that which constitutes itself only by disguising itself. It is not underneath the masks, but is formed from one mask to another, as though from one distinctive point to another, from one privileged instant to another, with and within the variations. (Deleuze 1994: 17)

A ‘repeated’ rhythm is not a repeated sameness, but is always rhythm differentiated, always potentially ‘poly-rhythmic’, precisely because repetition thrusts it *against* time, even against its own weave of forces, accents, and intensities. Derrida’s unmasking of the underlying metaphysics of Husserlian phenomenology: a time-

concept also fixed on retention as representation, an ideality also fixed on repetition as sameness.

In contrast to cadence and metricality, repetition and rhythm mark the kind of ‘unbalanced’ quality of a musical space. They express the production of difference in a musical space, which may, paradoxically, be expressed in terms of cadence and metricality, which may, in turn, differentiate the pulse of the musical space even further, and so on:

a period exists only in so far as it is determined by a tonic accent, commanded by intensities. Yet we would be mistaken about the function of accents if we said that they were reproduced at equal intervals. On the contrary, tonic and intensive values act by creating inequalities or incommensurabilities between metrically equivalent period or spaces ... Here again, the unequal is the most positive element. Cadence is only the envelope of a rhythm, and of a relation between rhythms. (Deleuze 1994: 21)

We tend to think of repetition in terms of continuity, and there may be some truth to this assumption. Alas, we experience it as a very distinct quality occurring in the musical *over time*, and in a certain way. But this assessment of repetition is isolatable only for a paranoid reception of a musical space, only for a one-dimensional (if at all dimensional!) critique, only for someone who insists upon asking, ‘How exactly is repetition functioning here?’. Assessing repetition in this way *represents* it—but this endeavor denies the fact of repetition’s presencing: ‘within representation, repetition is indeed forced to undo itself even as it occurs. Or rather, it does not occur at all. Repetition in itself cannot occur under these conditions’ (Deleuze 1994: 286). Representation is a way of paranoia, added to difference but reducing it to sameness. Repetition is a way of schizophrenia, an anarchic, infinitely primary affectation that is expressed through difference.

There is ... nothing repeated which may be isolated or abstracted from the repetition in which it was formed, but in which it is also hidden. There is no bare repetition ... (Deleuze 1994: 17)

Meanwhile, the affectation of repetition is happening elsewhere and everywhere, its emergence has already taken to its subversive, deterritorializing flight and spread like a virus. Repetition is infinitely more generative than cumulative, more regeneration than reiteration, more an arouser of difference than a sponge of sameness. As difference, it ‘takes pleasure in variation, ramification, improvisation’ (Holland 1999: 28). What we hear is never the same, at any instant, but infinitesimally different and infinitely repetitive. Repetition: build-up of intensities: fullness-to-explosion: ecstasy: (stillness).

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