A Posthumanist Aesthetics of Physicality in Music

An Understanding of The Mind-Body Problem
With Music by Marie Samuelsson

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Abstract

This thesis develops a posthumanist understanding of musical aesthetics, where the Cartesian mind-body dichotomy is questioned through the theory of agential realism, and where a theory of bodily expression is offered through the concept of musical touch. The music of Swedish composer Marie Samuelsson has often, both by herself and others, been described as expressing physicality, in contrast to intellectuality. This is understood as a rejection of early twentieth century modernism’s fascination for compositional methods employing systematic thinking, mathematical formulas, predetermined tone rows, atonality etc. Similarly, it is a rejection of aesthetic preferences describing music as an expression of the mind and the transcendent, where the corporeality of music is dismissed. Agential realism, a theory developed by posthumanist Karen Barad, explains how all knowledge must be experienced through the body, and how the mind cannot be seen as having prominence over the body – ultimately, the Cartesian separation of mind and body is disintegrated. This theory is used to legitimise the suggestion of music’s corporeality, and to create an understanding for why such statement might be of importance in contemporary society. The second theory, of Deniz Peters’ concept of musical touch, explains how music can express physicality, and is understood through Barad’s agential realism. It is argued that the intersubjectivity of the musical experience, including the composer, the performer as well as the listener, creates an understanding of musical expressivity that is dependent on corporeality. It is also argued that a bodily expression in music is an aesthetic choice made by the composer. Examples from Samuelsson’s repertoire are discussed in relation to the above-mentioned theories. Why her music is seen as particularly physical is argued to be because of her compositional methods, her explicit use of musicians’ bodies in real-time performance and her developments of extended techniques in collaborations with designated musicians.
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1. Introduction

This thesis develops a posthumanist aesthetics of music where the Cartesian mind-body problem is questioned, and offers an ontology of music that gives prominence to the matter (material/bodies) that music is dependent on to exist. The music of Swedish composer Marie Samuelsson has often, both by herself and others, been described as expressing physicality, in contrast to intellectuality, and this creates a curiosity for understanding why one would designate music with such terms. It is interpreted as Samuelsson rejects some aspects of the early twentieth century modernism’s fascination for compositional methods employing systematic thinking, mathematical formulas, predetermined tone rows, atonality etc. It is also a rejection of aesthetic preferences describing music as an expression of the mind and the transcendent, where the corporeality of music is dismissed. The modernist era is particularly chosen to contrast Samuelsson musical ideology, and functions as a strong example of where the Cartesian mind-body problem becomes particularly intensified and idealised. Samuelsson is rather interested in exploring compositional methods that allows for bodily expressions\(^1\) in music to come to the fore, and which will be argued to be dependent on the creative process of music making, the intersubjective musical experience shared between composer, performer and listener as well as the ideological beliefs of the composer. The musical ideological contrasts between certain modernists and Samuelsson demonstrate how, depending on musical aims and interests, the music can contain different kinds of expressions.

1.1. Methodology and Research Aims

The theoretical framework for this thesis is based on a posthumanist understanding of the Cartesian mind-body problem, focusing on feminist posthumanist Karen Barad’s “agential realism”. This theory emphasises a direct relationship between knowledge and matter, meaning that knowledge must be experienced through bodies, and as such, one can never “stand outside” a scientific observation. Because of this, it is argued that the mind cannot be seen as having prominence over the body – ultimately, the Cartesian separation of mind and body is disintegrated. Further, it is argued that music, like knowledge, must be experienced, as well as expressed, through bodies and matter.

However, for music to actually express physicality, in contrast to intellectuality, a turn to musicologist Deniz Peters’ concept of music touch is necessary. As a critique against certain aspects of modernism’s “purist” aesthetics and the aesthetic theories of musical expression as presented by Eduard Hanslick, Monroe Beardsley and Roger Scruton, Peters’ theory aims to develop an understanding of how music not only is physical, but also how expressions of physicality are possible. His concept of touch offers an understanding of musical expression

\(^1\) The terms “bodily expressions in music” and “expressions of physicality in music” will be used interchangeably and denotes to the same meaning.
that is useful when determining how bodily expressions in music can occur. With Peters’ theory it is argued that emphases on bodily or intellectual expressions in music is an aesthetic decision made by the composer and are a direct cause of the compositional processes, methods and techniques used.

Although this thesis uses a feminist theory to question the Cartesian mind-body problem with, it is never argued that Samuelsson has a feminist agenda with her music. However, by taking a posthumanist feminist stance here, it is possible to highlight the issues of the mind/body dichotomy existing in music and culture, and to illustrate how those issues can be discussed and resolved through musical aesthetics. What is offered is an aesthetics that seems to correspond with a composer’s personal musical ideology, yet it is to be understood merely as suggestion of how that ideology can be interpreted, and not as a determination of Samuelsson’s agenda. Essentially, a kind of musical analysis is performed here, where a framework is developed that emanates from a reception image of Samuelsson’s music, and which also corresponds to the composer’s personal musical ideology. Through the posthumanist theory and the theory of bodily expressions in music, this can be seen as a critique against, or at least an extension of, other aesthetics of musical expression. A posthumanist aesthetics is developed from this, and will be applied in a few short analyses of Samuelsson’s music in the end of the thesis.

The aim for this thesis is to create an understanding of the ontology of musical expression, and particularly the ontology of bodily expressions in music. This thesis thus develops an aesthetic theory applicable to all music, but which also aims to aid in defining different kinds of musical expression, both of physicality and intellectuality. The main interest here lies in studying how different ideological understandings of music affect compositional processes, and how those processes in turn affect the resulting music and eventually the experience of that music. There is a large focus on the intention of the composer as well as the reception of the listeners, which is here interpreted and aimed to be explained through a posthumanist aesthetics. This is not to discern any essential characteristics or musical elements that defines physicality in music completely, but rather it is aimed to offer a framework within which bodily expressions in music can be interpreted and explained.

1. 2. Disposition

The second chapter, following this introduction, will introduce composer Marie Samuelsson and demonstrate both her personal views and some reception claiming her music to express physicality. The third chapter first defines posthumanism in a general sense, as well as it offers some issues of gendered dualities in music and culture. This is followed by a rendition of Barad’s agential realism, as well as a translation of some of her key terms into a musical context. Chapter four presents modernism’s purist aesthetics and compositional methods used during this period. As an extension of this, some aesthetic theories of musical expression are discussed. Peters’ concept of touch is then explained, both considering its usefulness and
some shortcomings. At last, the posthumanist aesthetics developed is summarised. The fifth and last chapter firstly presents some compositional methods Samuelsson is known to use, contrasted to the ones employed in the modernist era. It then specifies what method will be used when analysing her music, deriving from the posthumanist aesthetics developed above. Finally, three musical works are chosen to exemplify this aesthetic theory and aims to offer an understanding of how bodily expressions in music are possible. A conclusion completes the thesis and offers some reflections on further research suggestions.
2. Physicality in Samuelsson’s Music

Classical music has long been an academic art form, where the intellect is highly esteemed. I find it interesting to work more holistically, where the music describes different states in which intellect and compositional reworking is set against the more primitive and physical. That is where I find my nerve.

Marie Samuelsson

2. 1. Introduction

Marie Samuelsson, born 1956, was in 1995 the third woman in Sweden (the first being Karin Rehnqvist) to complete the composition studies programme at the Royal College of Music in Stockholm. Her career as a composer began in the 1980s with writing music for several dance productions and also played in the rock band Elegi. In 1988 she began her composition studies at the Royal College of Music for Daniel Börtz and Lars-Erik Rosell, to later continue her studies with professor Sven-David Sandström and Pär Lindgren. At this time, the public already knew her as a composer who experiments with multi-art projects and “found object” instruments (Öhrström and Eriksson 1995, pp. 17-18). Since Samuelsson’s success with her graduation concert at Kulturhuset in Stockholm in 1995, she has had many works commissioned and performed by ensembles and orchestras at concerts, on TV and radio shows in both Sweden and abroad. She was also dedicated a four day long concert festival with the Royal Philharmonics in Stockholm in 2007. Phono Suecia has released a portrait CD with her music, Air Drum from 2003, and a second CD, Solgudinnan, was released by Samuelsson’s own record label Myran Prod in 2014.

In the statement above, Samuelsson presents the idea that there exists a dichotomy in art music between expressions of intellect and physicality, and she wants to incorporate musical expressions that can describe both sides of this dichotomy. Whether this is a reinforcement of a Cartesian dualism in music, or whether it is merely a loose statement aiming to express her musical interest in exploring different kinds of musical expressions, will be discussed more later on. However, it is so far apparent that Samuelsson is looking for a musical expression that resists the hierarchy of mind over body, or at least of intellect over physicality, and perhaps even sees the two as inseparable.

In an interview for a radio programme, Samuelsson says of her own work:

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2 Samuelsson quoted and translated in Rickards 2007b, p. 41.

3 See for example the show I Rummet, a multi-art show Samuelsson did with composer Eva Sidén, and Lufttrauma 1, a musical piece for alto saxophone, piano and percussion, where the percussion consists of an air drum usually found in warehouses (Öhrström and Eriksson 1995, p. 18).
My musical voice establishes through laborious work, musical piece by musical piece. My music is wordless conversations between human and nature, human and city, human and life. Rite and contemporaneity unifies, and the conception of time is central. The music induces a physical immediacy, like rock music … (Samuelsson in Tollan 2010)

The posthumanist attitude towards human life, as shall be explained later on, is here apparent, as is the constant and inevitable communication between human/nature//city/technology (or human/technology//nature/city) in our modern times. Samuelsson does not separate human from nature, or human from more urban settings. Moreover, the likeness of physical immediacy with rock music can perhaps be interpreted as a wish for the composer to create an instant presence in the live performance, one where the audience is to feel the music with their entire bodies, and not just listen intellectually and analytically.

2. 2. Some Reception of Samuelsson’s Music

The quote in the beginning of this chapter is derived from the concert program for Samuelsson’s four day long composer festival at Stockholms Konserthus dedicated to her music in 2007. Guy Rickards, an English music critic, wrote the description of Samuelsson and her works in the same concert program. He describes her similarly:

The primitive, the physical, the intellectual: add to that the sheer force of her compositional personality. There you have an excellent description of the phenomenon Marie Samuelsson … Her music embodies these qualities and simultaneously creates a tangible presence when it streams from the instruments (or loudspeakers) to the listener’s ears. (2007a, p. 7)

Embodies and tangible: these words are referring to something with physical substance, which seem consciously selected by Rickards in this introductory paragraph of his presentation. He continues to describe the physicality in her music as “… not reliant on pure volume or massive textures but rather on its variety and her way of creating wholly original sonorities in almost every bar” (2007b, p. 41). So the physicality seems not to be sourced from loudness or orchestral grandness in her music, but rather from her ability to mediate

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4 “Min egen musikaliska röst byggs upp genom idogt arbete, musikstycke för musikstycke. Min musik är ordlösa samtal mellan människa och natur, människa och stad, människa och liv. Rit och nutid samsas och tidskänslan är central. Musiken får en fysisk direkthet, liksom rockmusik…” (My translation)

5 “Det primitiva, det fysiska, det intellektuella: till detta ska tilläggas den rena kraften i hennes konstnärliga egenart. Där har man en utmärkt beskrivning av fenomenet Marie Samuelsson … Hennes musik förkroppsligar dessa kvaliteter och uppvisar samtidigt en förnimbar närvaro när den strömmar från instrumenten (eller högtalarna) till lyssnarens öron.” (My translation)
sounds that appear original and in constant change – unpredictable, perhaps. A similar quote
to Samuelsson’s above is found in Börje Stålhammar’s portrait of the composer. He writes:

Marie Samuelsson strives for her music to touch upon different states where intellect and compositional elaborations either are placed against more primitive and bodily states or are joined in a totality. “That is where I find my nerve”, she says. (Stålhammar 2009, pp. 111-2)⁶

It can here be suggested that Samuelsson thinks there is a clear difference between what makes music intellectual or physical, and the two can either be separated or combined. This also seem to be conjunctive with the listening experience, since the music can both express intellectuality and/or physicality, and simultaneously touch upon such states in the listener. Whether Stålhammar has taken these words from the concert program, or if the composer is repeating herself in the conversation with Stålhammar, either way it is apparent that the primitive and bodily/physical states are what triggers Samuelsson’s compositional inspiration.

Moreover, the connection between primitive and bodily states refers to there being an inherent link between the terms, meaning that something in her music could not be primitive without being physical, and vice versa. What does primitive mean in this case, though? Is it to say “simple”, as in uncomplicated music material? Ritualistic? Or is it perhaps referring to human kind’s savage nature? In the context of this thesis, the word will be interpreted as the latter, meaning that “primitive” and “physical” have a connection in terms of human nature, yet not necessarily a savage such nature. For her music is again described by Rickards as “in no way primitivist, if one thinks of the deliberate evocations of ancient rituals … Nor is there anything primitive and simplistic about her work. Rather, Samuelsson’s output shows a more cosmopolitan sensitivity, a studied diversity and complexity of expression …” (Rickards 2007b, p. 41). The interpretation of the word primitive in this context thus results in meaning music that has the ability to express an understanding of human nature, and in this case human nature in a cosmopolitan surrounding.⁷

Rickards notes that rhythm is an essential element in Samuelsson’s music, and calls it “one of the most immediately noticeable aspects of her music …” (Rickards 2007b, p. 41). Perhaps primitivism and rhythm have the most obvious connection to the body, because of its

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⁶ “Marie Samuelsson strävar efter att i sin musik vidröra olika tillstånd där intellekt och kompositoriska bearbetningar antingen ställs mot mera primitiva och kroppsliga tillstånd eller förs samman till en helhet. ’Det är där jag hittar min nerv’, säger hon.” (My translation)

⁷ Perhaps this is even a very posthumanist understanding of human nature, where urbanisation and technology plays a huge role in modern society? For further definition of the term posthumanism, see Chapter 3.
connection language and to the pulse of the human heart. Rhythm might therefore be the most primal of musical parameters, and although it is not a revolutionising link between music and the human body, it appears to be especially palpable in Samuelsson’s music. On Samuelsson’s website one can again read about the connection between physicality and rhythm:

Her works are often physical and contain virtuosic parts. For the listener the music is exciting in its rhythm and at the same time beautiful in an almost impressionistic way, without ever abandoning her strong creative conviction and consistency, which have become her hallmarks (Jacobsson 2012).

As evident in these quotes, there is a consistent idea that Samuelsson’s music has the ability to express physicality, both within the composer and critics. Moreover, her music also “touches” upon different states in the listener – a statement that later on will be argued to correlate with the intention of the composer as well as the musical expression. The compositional method, as well as aesthetic ideological reasoning, is thus something that seems to leave imprints on the expression of the music, and which are apprehended as such in the listener. One last important aspect of all of these quotes is that they are, since they appear in either interviews, CD booklets or on the composer’s website, approved by the composer herself. This means that although this is a study in both Samuelsson’s personal musical ideology and the reception of her music, all reception statements are more or less a view shared by the composer. However, it still shows how the intentions of a composer actually can be in accordance with the listeners’ experience – an important tenet to be continued later on.

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8 One huge subject of the body, physicality and music is that of dance. However, to cover the subject of dance would require a much larger effort than what is allowed for within the scope of this thesis.
3. A Posthumanist Understanding of The Mind-Body Problem

3.1. Introduction

Posthumanism\(^9\) is essentially, as post-terms usually suggests, not necessarily something that comes after humanism, but is also an -ism that stands in opposition to humanism. Humanism can be summarised as a category of ethical philosophies such as universal truth and morality, rationality, reason, objectivity and agency inherited from the Renaissance and the Enlightenment, which still governs most philosophical thought today (Wolfe 2010, pp. xi-xii). Posthumanism, on the other hand, is a rather elusive term and more complicated to determine. Theorist, philosophers and critical thinkers whose names often appear when searching the term “posthumanism” are, amongst many more, Michel Foucault, Donna Haraway, Judith Butler, Bruno Latour, Katherine Hayles, Rosi Braidotti and Karen Barad. Although they all in some way question the normative philosophical thought of humanism, they also differ variously in their own theories of humanity, epistemology, ontology, language and more.

Cary Wolfe means that although posthumanism offers “irreconcilable meanings”, he does not see this as a “cautionary tale” but rather as an “opportunity” (ibid). This is to say that, although posthumanism(s) might seem contradictory at times, it rather shows that a universal theory or objectivity of humanity is unattainable, which in fact is what most posthumanist theories in one or another way together proclaim.

What is common between the different stances is that posthumanism insists on a decentring of the human, an acceptance of technology’s part of and affect on human life, as well as human beings’ dependence on the medical, informatics and economic networks now deeply integrated into our world (ibid, pp. xiii-xv).\(^10\) Posthumanism in this thesis does not, however,

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\(^9\) Posthumanism can be seen as an extension of both postmodernism and poststructuralism. Postmodernism is a critique of modernism, which will be discussed later, and more focused on the arts, but too extensive and ambiguous to cover here. Poststructuralism is closely related to posthumanism (Foucault and Butler, mentioned in this chapter, are often associated with both terms), but focuses more on language and meaning than science and knowledge. The reason for using posthumanism specifically in this thesis is because it, at least through Barad’s theory discussed later, represents an ideology which correlates with the aesthetic theory developed in this thesis.

\(^10\) Another strand of posthumanism is what is called tranhumanism. This strand sees itself as an extension of humanism, rather than an opposition to it. Part of tranhumanism is for example the “cyborg” strand, with Donna Haraway’s “A Cyborg Manifesto” as an example. In this essay, Haraway contends for the cyborg to be “a creature simultaneously animal and machine”, and argues “for the cyborg as a fiction mapping our social and bodily reality and as an imaginative resource suggesting some very fruitful couplings” (1991, p. 149). The human is thus extended into technology, she argues, and technology and machines cannot be seen as separate from nature. Haraway’s essay is essentially a critique of traditional notions of feminism, by for example questioning the category “women”. Haraway has also written “Situated Knowledges: The Science Question in Feminism as a Site of Discourse on the Privilege of Partial Perspective” (1988) as a suggestion to how one could discuss the subject of objectivity from a feminist perspective. The theory in this essay is similar to that of Karen Barad that will be discussed further on, however it is for now only necessary to develop one feminist theory for this thesis. Two other interesting, but for now also only worth mentioning, essays on feminist theory and science
focus on the extension of the human into technology, but rather on philosophical views on an epistemology and ontology of the world in which the human is decentred and no longer seen as a possible creator or observer of objective knowledge. As such, the posthumanist theory used here is one that will provide an understanding of the mind-body problem and why the mind has been more valued than the body, not only in science, but also in music and aesthetics throughout history. It is essentially to suggest that the body should be granted just as much agency as the mind – an ideology that can be suggested to sympathise with Samuelsson’s musical beliefs.

The understanding of posthumanism in this context must, however, be seen as only one of many, and as such, it is not necessary to here further develop the different branches of posthumanism that have been, and still are, under development. The next section will shortly explain Cartesian dualism and the mind-body problem and what issues have arisen in philosophy and science (and music) from this, and especially the issue that is discussed later on in the section on feminist theorist Karen Barad, who approaches the mind-body problem through her theory of an “agential realism”. That will in turn be connected to the theory of aesthetics explained in the next chapter.

3. 2. Cartesian Dualism and the Mind-Body Problem

The mind-body problem is most commonly discussed in relation to Cartesian dualism, or the philosophy of mind, developed by René Descartes (1596-1650) in the seventeenth century.

In Cartesian dualism the separation of mind and matter, or consciousness and physicality, is seen as clearly distinct. Thus the mental realm and the physical realm are to Descartes “ontologically separate”, (Foster 1991, p. 1). This separation has been seen as a problem, since it does not explain how the mind and body cooperates, or how we as humans seem to be completely dependent on our bodies. Although our minds might be immaterial, we have no access to them if it was not for our bodies, and without our functioning minds we would have no way of being aware of our bodies. This is called the mind-body problem, and although it

are Helen Longino’s “Can there be a Feminist Science” (1987) and Sandra Harding’s “Can Feminist Thought Make Economics more Objective?” (1995).

11 Again, see Haraway’s “A Cyborg Manifesto” (1991).

12 Regarding Descartes and music, his Compendium musicae written in 1618, but first published posthumously in 1650 is an interesting mention. It is an early document of Descartes’ scientific interest and inspired his forthcoming work in metaphysics. However, Descartes’ musical writings will not be developed here since it does not concern the kind of musical aesthetics discussed in this thesis. For more insights on the Compendium musicae and its significance for Descartes writings, see for example Augst (1965), Moreno (2004, pp. 50-84), or Jorgensen (2012).
has by no means ever been “solved”, the idea has characterised Western philosophy for centuries.\(^\text{13}\)

The mind has been seen as having prominence over the body, and the body has to adapt to the power of the mind. The body has thus more or less been seen as a burden to the mind since Descartes. As feminist philosopher Susan Bordo puts it, “… what remains the constant element throughout historical variation is the construction of body as something apart from the true self (whether conceived as soul, mind, spirit, will, creativity, freedom) and as undermining the best efforts of that self. That which is not-body is the highest, the best, the noblest, the closest to God; that which is body is the albatross, the heavy drag on self-realization” (1993, p. 5). This kind of dualistic thinking has not only created issues for science and psychological studies, for example, but has also generated much concern particularly in cultural and feminist theory.

3. 2. 1. A Gendered Duality

Dualisms can be found everywhere, such as in the man/woman, culture/nature and mind/body dichotomies etc. Within these dualisms, there is a hierarchical structure, and the term that appears first in this division is usually the one granted more prominence and power. Man is commonly cast in the role as the mind (and culture) and woman in the role as the body (and nature).\(^\text{14}\) As have been already mentioned, mind has prominence over the body, and thus, according to this structural thinking, man has prominence over woman and culture over nature. This is common thought in Western culture and philosophy, however, despite its normative usage, the implications of utilising this kind of dualistic vocabulary have been critical not least for women, and thus it is still a necessary issue to raise.\(^\text{15}\) Many starting points for feminist theory have taken place within the mind-body problem,\(^\text{16}\) and although this

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\(^{13}\) There have of course existed philosophers and critics who have disagreed with Descartes throughout history. Dutch philosopher Baruch Spinoza (1632-1677) who was a contemporary to Descartes did not see mind and body as separate substances. See his posthumous work *Ethics*, or Colin R. Marshall’s reading of Spinoza in “The Mind and the Body as ‘One and the Same Thing’ in Spinoza” (2009). There are also other contemporary (to us) arguments against Cartesian dualism, for example neurologist António Damásio’s opposition to the separation of mind and body, whose writings is an extension of Spinoza. Other contemporary discussions evolve around consciousness, considering for example sensory experiences of pain or colours that raises difficult questions of materialism (see Rozemund 2008, p. 387).

\(^{14}\) This should not be an unfamiliar analogy to the reader, however if further reading on the subject is needed, see for example Bordo (1993) or Spelman (1982) for writings on “woman as body” in Western philosophy.

\(^{15}\) There are endless instances of how women are degraded within this dichotomy. See Bordo (1993) for further examples from culture where this kind of hierarchical dualism is commonly used and taken for granted.

\(^{16}\) *The Second Sex* from 1949 by Simone de Beauvoir is notably the first book that highlighted the issue of the relationship between the body and the self from a feminist perspective. Further developments of feminist theory and the (woman’s) body range from radical feminism, philosophical and psychoanalytical feminism (Luce Irigaray and later Julia Kristeleva), performativity and materialisation of the body in Judith Butler’s works (see
thesis does not concern only feminist theory, it pervades it as an underlying ideology throughout. As shall be explained below, Cartesian dualism can also be found in music and aesthetics, which have sparked ideas for certain feminist musicologists.

3.2.2. Dualism and Gender in Music

As seen in Chapter 2 above, Samuelsson delivers her ideological view on what music is and should be. She also entails that she transmits that ideology through her music. She clearly thinks that classical music, as an academic art form, has not given her enough stimuli because it has focused too much on “the intellect”. Is this a rejection of a Cartesian dualism in music and a conscious choice made to loosen the difference between “intellect” and “physicality” in music? Whether Samuelsson’s ideological beliefs here concern a kind of gender oppression in music however is not clear, and perhaps not the most interesting question to ask. Rather, it may concern a much larger aspect of life and music, how the ontology of music can be understood and how that ontology can be transmitted through specific musical techniques. It concerns a wish to remind the listener of the physicality of listening and playing music, as well as of composing, just as it is a reminder of the importance of the physicality of our being in this world. This might in turn also reflect a feminist stand, but is perhaps not of primary interest of the composer (at least not outspokenly so). Yet the gender question in music cannot be left out of this discussion. After all, the way music is viewed philosophically and ontologically is important for the way women’s role is and have been valued within this discourse because, as have been argued, and will be further defined, both the ontology of music and the ontology of our being reflects the same principal: one that can provide an understanding of knowledge and being in this world through the understanding of music.

Feminist musicologist Suzanne Cusick suggests, “the role of the composer is implicitly always gendered masculine” (1994, p. 16). This statement might seem rather provoking, but her reflection relates to the mind-body dichotomy discussed above. She continues, “[this is] not because so many individuals who live in the category are biologically male, but because the composer has come to be understood to be mind – mind that creates patterns of sounds to which other minds assign meanings” (ibid). The (masculine) composer thus creates from mind to mind, and the bodies that put the music into action are completely ignored in the analysis and understanding of the music. However, by ignoring the bodily factors that make music, the feminine is also ignored, and by that Cusick means we are fooling ourselves to

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17 For further discussion of the composer role as male and the issues this has created for women composers, see Christine Battersby’s Gender and Genius: Towards a Feminist Aesthetics (1989).

18 This statement can also be found in Hanslick’s On the Musically Beautiful, but perhaps with a different agenda behind. He writes: “Composing is a work of mind upon material compatible with mind” (1986 [1854], p. 31).
believe that music can carry some kind of (male) universal truth. She continues: “Identification of both composer and music as mind may be our discipline’s version of what Donna Haraway calls the ‘god trick,’ the epistemological illusion of all-encompassing, and thus objective, knowledge” (ibid). With this quote, it could be argued that by ignoring the facticity of bodily action in music making, music is said to exist outside of the realm of ordinary, material life. This would in turn also mean that women could not be able to express musical ideas, which is essentially what Cusick is trying to say and of course oppose to.

Further:

Music, an art which self-evidently does not exist until bodies make it and/or receive it, is thought about as if it were a mind-mind game. Thus, when we think analytically about music, what we ordinarily do is describe practices of the mind (the composer's choices) for the sake of informing the practices of other minds (who will assign meaning to the resulting sounds). We locate musical meaning in the audible communication of one creating mind to a cocreator, one whose highly attentive listening is in effect a shared tenancy of the composer's subject position. We end by ignoring the fact that these practices of the mind are nonpractices without the bodily practices they call for – about which it has become unthinkable to think. (ibid)

As such, Cusick suggests a kind of analysis method that includes the body of the performer (and perhaps also the body of the composer and listener, as well as the body of music) when interpreting music. By that, she also rejects analysis methods that do not take into account the gender or other socially constructed metaphors of music that we inevitably, but mostly only subconsciously, might hear. One last reflection on the dangers of a gendered duality in music, and the risk when making this connection between women and the body, in relation to men and the mind, is that this dichotomy could be reinforced. However, as the next section will demonstrate, the body does in fact have agency and power, just like the mind, and by therefore reinstating the body into music would be a way to also (re)establish woman into this discourse – not by enhancing this dichotomy, but by subverting it.

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19 Haraway’s “god trick” theory is mostly discussed in “Situated Knowledges: The Science Question in Feminism as a Site of Discourse on the Privilege of Partial Perspective”. It means that as humans we have fooled ourselves to believe that objective knowledge can be obtained, and that to see or interpret from God is possible. To Haraway though, this is merely an excuse from taking responsibility for certain actions and there is no way of standing outside of a situation and seeing externally from oneself. One is always part of the science (or perhaps music) that one is performing, and that must always be a part of the conclusion. Or as Haraway puts it, one must always have a “partial perspective”.

20 One feminist musicologist who has written extensively on this subject is Susan McClary. See especially her *Feminine Endings: Music, Sexuality and Gender* (2002 [1991]).
3. 3. Barad’s Agential Realism

Why are language and culture granted their own agency and historicity while matter is figured as passive and immutable, or at best inherits a potential for change derivatively from language and culture? (Barad 2003, p. 801)

To understand the posthumanist account of the mind-body problem, a turn to Karen Barad and her theory of an “agential realism” is necessary. Barad is a science studies scholar and feminist theorist with a Ph.D. in theoretical particle physics. Her background might seem far away from the topic of musical aesthetics, but as shall be discussed, her theories can be argued to have more in common with music than what might firstly be believed. The reason for using Barad’s theory in this context is because she develops a theory, not only of how to understand objectivity and knowledge in science, but how to view and understand the world and all its different aspects.

Barad’s theory will be used as one way of understanding the ontology of music, and from that, a theory of musical aesthetics will be developed. However, how music can be argued as expressing physicality will be discussed later in Chapter 4. For now, an attempt at a solution of the mind-body problem is at hand. Barad develops her agential realism through the concept of performativity, which firstly needs a short definition.

3. 3. 1. Posthumanist Performativity

Performativity is a term derived from Judith Butler, another prominent philosopher, critical and feminist theorist. Butler explains performativity as “… that reiterative power of discourse to produce the phenomena that it regulates and constrains” (1988; 1993, p. 3). Butler mainly writes on performativity and gender constitution as a performative act, meaning that gender is not something we are or have, but rather something we do through repeated (performative) acts. Barad wants to offer an elaboration of performativity – “a materialist, naturalist and posthumanist elaboration – that allows matter its due as an active participant in the world’s becoming, in its on-going ‘intra-activity’” (2003, p. 803). She begins by making a distinction between representationalism and performativity. She defines representationalism as that which makes an ontological separation between the representation and what it represents, or between words and things. Representationalism has become problematic in science studies according to Barad, because there is a doubt in whether representations really can mediate “our access to the material world” (ibid, p. 806).

Performativity is helpful in this situation because it shifts the focus from linguistic representations of ontological things “awaiting” to be represented to discursive practices, and
how those practices in fact *produce* material bodies (ibid, pp. 807-808, my italics). Barad also means that a posthumanist account of performativity decentres the “human”, and questions whether there is a difference between the “human” and “nonhuman”, and whether that non-difference really could be explained or if it even matters. On bodies Barad continues:

> All bodies, not merely “human” bodies, come to matter through the world’s iterative intra-activity – its performativity. This is true not only of the surface or contours of the body but also of the body in the fullness of its physicality, including the very “atoms” of its being. Bodies are not objects with inherent boundaries and properties; they are material-discursive phenomena. “Human” bodies are not inherently different from “nonhuman” ones. (Ibid, p. 823)

By this statement, Barad refuses the dichotomies of culture/nature, and of subject/object, word/world, human/nonhuman, and all other dualisms discussed earlier. Experience and knowledge is always obtained *through* one’s body, and how one interprets that knowledge is completely dependent on one’s physical experience of reality. Discursive practices and material phenomena are thus interrelated.

### 3. 3. 2. Agential Realism

Building on physicist Niels Bohr’s philosophy-physics of a new epistemological framework of science that challenges the representationalist view of the world, Barad develops her own theory of knowledge. She means that instead of just focusing on epistemology as a new dimension of science, ontology also needs to be included. Barad actually believes the two are inseparable.

She begins by suggesting, through Bohr, that an observed “object” is inseparable from the “agencies of observation”. Instead of speaking of objects, we should say “phenomena” because this “causal relationship between the apparatuses of bodily production and the phenomena produced is one of ‘agential intra-action’” (Barad 2003, p. 814). This means that there is a causal relationship between discursive practices (instead of words) and specific material phenomena (material relations rather than things) and this relationship Barad calls

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21 The same can of course, and has been, been questioned about music and whether music has representational properties. See Scruton (1997) on music, representation and imitation pp. 118-139. However, when applying Barad’s posthumanist performativity rather than representationalism on music, a new understanding of how musical meaning is created, but more on this below.

22 Intra-actions differ from interactions in the sense that an interaction “presumes the prior existence of independent entities/relata” (Barad 2003, p. 815). An intra-action, on the other hand, means that the relata is produced simultaneously as the observation of it as relata.

23 See Rouse (2004, p. 150) for a further discussion of Barad’s notion of “phenomena”, and how, if a phenomenon is to be seen more as a material relation than a determined entity, one is to separate it from other phenomena if the apparatus of observation is part of/intra-active with the phenomena. Rouse means that for
an agential intra-action. In other words, discourse cannot be separated from materiality. The context for the observation of an object affects the understanding of that object, and the technologies used for observation is what Barad calls the “apparatuses”. However, an apparatus is in itself created for a specific purpose, which affects how the object of study is studied and thus also affects the outcome of the experiment. 24

As such, Barad resists the representationalist view of what we call reality and instead offers a theory of agential realism. To understand this theory, one must first understand the concept of agency. Barad explains it like this:

Agency is not aligned with human intentionality or subjectivity. Nor does it merely entail resignification or other specific kinds of moves within a social geometry of antihumanism. Agency is a matter of intra-acting; it is an enactment, not something that someone or something has. Agency cannot be designated as an attribute of “subjects” or “objects” (as they do not preexist as such). Agency is not an attribute whatsoever – it is “doing”/“being” in its intra-activity [i.e. a performativity]. Agency is the enactment of iterative changes to particular practices through the dynamics of intra-activity. (Ibid, pp. 826-7)

Agency can thus be interpreted as that which human and nonhuman entities do to make things happen in the world – it is to do change. This doing is constant and is what defines the ontology the world. The world is essentially an on-going enactment of agency from all the components that the world consists of. Since intra-activity is not a relation but a relationship, intra-activity is creating and created by agency continuously. Agential realism, or the agential realist account of ontology, challenges the view that nature is a passive surface awaiting to be marked by culture. Essentially, agential realism is a theory of a simultaneous knowing of/being in the world. Lastly, Barad explains it as:

Practices of knowing and being are not isolatable, but rather they are mutually implicated. We do not obtain knowledge by standing outside of the world; we

phenomena to “constitute patters of local intelligibility … the measuring apparatus has to constitute … that to which it is intelligible” (ibid), meaning that there will be a comprehensible difference between the phenomena and the apparatus, despite their constant intra-activity. However, there will be no further need in explaining these terms here, as they might deviate too much from the main purpose of this thesis.

24 Important to point out here is that by not separating the object of study from the observer it does not mean that objective knowledge is completely unobtainable. This could be a way for science to create objective results, by using Bohr’s term “phenomena” (Lykke 2010, p. 142). Objectivity has so far been a continuous, yet fairly unquestioned, problem in science throughout history. This issue has also been highlighted by other feminists, among them Donna Haraway in her article “Situated Knowledges: The Science Question in Feminism and the Privilege of Partial Perspective” (1988), Helen Longino’s “Can there be a Feminist Science” (1987) and Sandra Harding’s “Can feminist thought make economics more objective?” (1995).
know because “we” are of the world. We are part of the world in its differential becoming. The separation of epistemology from ontology is a reverberation of a metaphysics that assumes an inherent difference between human and nonhuman, subject and object, mind and body, matter and discourse. Onto-epistem-ology – the study of practices of knowing in being – is probably a better way to think about the kind of understandings that are needed to come to terms with how specific intra-actions matter. (Ibid, p. 829)

The reason for using this theory should by now hopefully be clear. It has aimed to show that the body has agency, just as the mind has agency. But the body not only has agency; it just as much does agency. In other words, the body has the power to affect our minds, because in our on-going intra-activity in this world – in our constant knowing in becoming or onto-epistemology – that is how we make the world intelligible, a point proven to be important when it later comes to the discussion of music.

3. 3. 3. The Agential Realism of Music

If translating Barad’s theory to music a few interesting ideas are created. Firstly, music is essentially agential intra-action. Music needs matter to exist, but without the idea of music it cannot exist either: music does not make itself, and if so, we would not understand it as such. It also means that universal truth about music, absolute music, is unattainable and does not exist – music does not exist outside our material reality. Music is always understood through the context of its production, however big or small that context is. The listener is not just an observer of music, but also a maker of music, just as much as the performer makes music, or as the composer composes. The music happens at several places at once. Whether there really is a difference between composer, performer and listener thus becomes questionable, and the lines between these different agents of music making become blurred. To make this parallel to music even clearer, a translation of Barad’s different terms into a musical context is helpful.

Apparatuses: This means the technologies used for observation, which can be equalled with musical instruments, both acoustic and technological such. Since an object of observation is created for a specific purpose, with hope for a certain outcome, that object will affect the result. The same can be said of material musical instruments: they are created to fulfil a sonorous need, which of course affects the compositional result. But an instrument can also be used for purposes it was not originally built for, although always restricted by is physical qualities. Ultimately, it can be argued that the apparatuses are the material frameworks within which the music can be created through.

Material Phenomena: Both the bodies and the instruments with which the music is played can be seen as material phenomena. Remember that material phenomena are relations between matter and matter – not passive, mute substances. With phenomena music is created, but music also creates phenomena. A violin is not a violin unless it is played upon as a violin. As
such, it can be suggested that music is not only an expression from our bodies, but it creates our bodies too.

*Discursive Practices*: The discursive practice of music can be understood as music being a communicative practice, one that has agency (see below) to define and construct not only meaning, but also the referents (bodies) that both express and receive the music.²⁵

*Posthumanist Performativity*: Music is performative. Not only in the sense that it needs to be played or performed to exist, but the way we understand music is always performative. Compare that to a representationalist view on music, where music would be an expression of our reality, of our feelings or of God for example. As much as it might be just that, it is just as much a *creation* of our reality. See for example Susan McClary’s comment on the gender difference in music:

The codes marking gender difference in music are informed by the prevalent attitudes of their time. But they also themselves participate in social formation, inasmuch as individuals learn how to be gendered beings through their interactions with cultural discourses such as music. Moreover, *music does not just passively reflect society; it also serves as a public forum within which various models of gender organization (along with many other aspects of social life) are asserted, adopted, contested and negotiated* (2002 [1991], pp. 7-8, my italics).

What makes the performativity of music posthumanist is that it does not give more or less agency to the different material phenomena creating music, be that human bodies or purpose built instruments, or to the ideas initially creating the music.

*Intra-activity*: An intra-action means that the relata is produced simultaneously as the observation of it as relata. The music is produced at the same time as the observation of the music as it is happening. Music *is* constant intra-activity, because we can only understand it as music when it is happening, even if it is just a humming inside our heads.

*Agency*: Agency is something that one does, not only what one has. As such, if music is seen as agency, it can be suggested that music is not just something that happens in itself, something that we then subsequently interpret. Music *does* agency in the sense that it affects our world in its becoming. Music can make things happen, sometimes things that is out of our hands, and sometimes within our intentionality. Music is a doing in an on-going intra-activity

²⁵ Foucault did not see music and other arts as discursive practices (see Foucault 1969, cited in michel-foucault.com 2012, where some non-discursive practices are listed), however, it is still useful to determine music as a discursive practice in this context, since music here acts as communicative practice, where different agents gather around and understand the same phenomenon.
between different phenomena. The McClary quote above is a good example of how music has agency – the agency to do things with our society, and not just to comment on it.

**Onto-Epistem-Ology:** We are not outside observers of music, just as we are not outside observers of the world in its becoming. We are always part of the observation, and thus part of the becoming. With this theory, it could be suggested that the music happens *together with/through* the listener, just as much as it happens with/through the composer, and with/through the performer. Music is part of our knowing in becoming; music is onto-epistem-ology.

### 3. 4. A Summary

Through these clarifications, it can be suggested that music is the perfect example of agential realism. Barad’s theory has therefore answered two questions: the first is, as has been shown, how the so-called mind-body problem can be attended to. As such, the focus has been shifted from the importance and the prominence of the human mind to the equally important human body. Knowledge must be obtained through one’s physical *and* mental being. Neither of the two (mind or body) should be granted more agency than the other, and an understanding of how the body can regain its influence has been created. The second question of whether music can be seen as something that is dependent on our own bodies and the material world has also been answered. If it were not for the material world, and our material bodies within it, music would not even exist. It can thus be suggested that music cannot even be seen as something abstract or completely transcendent, because we are always part of its creation and of the context in which we understand it.

This use of Barad’s agential realism has been necessary for understanding how music will be viewed throughout the rest of this thesis, and it has established a framework within which the aesthetic theory will be developed. So far, it has been explained how music could be seen as a discursive practice, and as such, how it could be subject to many different kinds of interpretations. Depending on the context (where many different aspects such as aesthetical, social, historical, personal etc. are involved), music can mean different (or the same) things to people. In Samuelsson’s music for example, there seem to be a common understanding between both her and others that her music is in one or another way expressing physicality.

However, Barad’s theory has only explained how music in general can be seen as something physical, or at least as something that is part of our physical/material reality. How music can specifically *express* physicality is yet to be explored though, and especially how some music can express physicality *more* than other. Before defining how physical expression in music could be explained however, an understanding of what musical expression even could be is necessary, as well as what “intellectuality” in music would refer to in contrast to “physicality”. Barad’s agential realism will be returned to in the end of the next chapter to complete the aesthetics developed.
4. Musical Aesthetics and Expression

4.1. Introduction

As mentioned in the first chapter on physicality in Samuelsson’s music, the composer expresses a rejection against art music’s focus on the “intellectual” and instead she wants to incorporate a “more holistic” style, and express physical as well as intellectual states in her music. What would intellectual music be? It can with fair certainty be suggested that the kind of musical style Samuelsson is to referring when calling art music too intellectual is twentieth century modernism, and its focus on certain aesthetics and compositional techniques. Especially late modernism was an era where systematic thinking, mathematical formulas, predetermined tone rows, atonality etc. inspired many composers. It can be argued that it is a kind of compositional method and reasoning Samuelsson opposes to, and as consciously aware of them, she chooses to employ other compositional techniques in her works, but more on this in a later chapter. This chapter focuses on determining what the expression of physicality in, or bodily expression of, music would be, and how that stands in relation to the modernist purist aesthetics practiced in the mid-twentieth century. It will also explain how musical expression could be understood from an agential realist account as described above. Finally, a posthumanist aesthetics will, from these conclusions, be explicated and defined for the analysis chapter further on.

4.2. Modernism and Purist Aesthetics

Some aspects of the early twentieth century modernism demonstrate a particular emphasis on the expression of the mind, and the interest of idealising music as a means to separate the mind from the body or the material world. It can thus be argued that the Cartesian mind-body problem is notably enforced during this period. If focusing primarily on intellectual methods of composing explored in the modernist era, there are at least two ways in which this can be demonstrated, deriving from composers such as Schoenberg, Webern and Berg the Second Viennese School’s twelve-tone music, as well as Joseph Matthias Hauer’s similar system of hexachords developed in the 1920s, with continuing writings by Ernst Krenek. The first of the two intellectual stances extending from twelve-tone music would be to work with music theory and mathematics. This was early manifested particularly by Krenek who discussed twelve-tone music and the practical application of mathematics. Krenek was determined, for example, to explore the variations of all possible permutations of the twelve-tone row. He also suggested mathematics to be a production of the human mind and music to be a form of

26 Mathematical music theory has existed for many centuries, even millennia, in different forms, and can be dated back to Pythagoras, before Plato, and his (or his disciples’) division of the octave by a fourth and fifth, as well as expressing musical intervals as arithmetic ratios. See Crocker (1963) on Pythagorean arithmetic and music theory. For a later instance of Pythagorean theory in music demonstrated in Gioseffo Zarlino, see Moreno (2004, pp. 25-49).
thought (see Derkert 2007, pp. 227-235, particularly p. 228). As such, Krenek’s ideology lay close to both an intuitional and formalist account of music, suggesting music and mathematics to be an expression of the free, creative mind, (ibid, pp. 233-4). The same attitude can be found in Ferruccio Busoni’s manifesto of music, *Sketch of a New Esthetic of Music*, written a few decades earlier. According to Busoni, music is the means by which one can escape the constraints of the natural laws: a kind of anti-physicality, in a sense. Erinne Knyt summarises: “Tones were, according to Busoni, incorporeal, fluid and abstract, and hence unlimited by constraints of time or inherent meaning. Rather than possessing an earthly body that could be seen or touched, like sculptures, paintings or architecture, music, consisting of sound waves, sails through the air invisibly, and unhindered by constraints of matter, location or systematization” (Knyt 2012, p. 50). The passage in Busoni she is referring to is the following:

> Young as it is, this child, we already recognize that it possesses one radiant attribute which signalizes it beyond all its elder sisters. And the lawgivers will not see this marvelous attribute, lest their laws should be thrown to the winds. This child – *it floats on air*! It touches not the earth with its feet. It knows no law of gravitation. It is well nigh incorporeal. Its material is transparent. It is sonorous air. It is almost Nature herself. It is – free. (Busoni 1962 [1911], p. 4)

This idea is also not far from Hauer’s notion of musical events as purely spiritual phenomena, something that atonal (dodecaphonic) music would, according to him, eligibly envisage. Hauer also makes a clear distinction between the spiritual form of music, or gestures as he calls it, as they appear in a composers mind, and the constrainst they meet in the physical world, held back by distortions created by instruments but to finally become restored in the listener in its pure spiritual form (Covach 2002, pp. 604-605). Another obvious example of mathematical (and scientific) music theory is the one envisaged by Milton Babbitt and his theories of the twelve-tone system. He claimed that scientific “methods” or scientific “language” was the only way to formulate concepts for music theory (see, for example, Babbitt 2003 [1961]).

The other way to think about music as intellectual would be the stance taken by composers interested in music as a physical phenomenon (without, importantly, aiming to express

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27 For a further understanding of the different theories of music and mathematics, ranging from Pythagorean ages to the modernists in the first half of the twentieth century, see Nolan (2002, pp. 272-304).

28 In one sense, this is exactly what is occurring in this thesis: a scientific theory, or at least a theory of knowledge (epistemology) is applied on music, both to understand the theory (agential realism) applied, and for developing a new understanding of music. However, the scientific theoretical ideology Babbitt proclaims is very much positivist, and as such, rather different from the theory developed in this thesis. This shows, however, that science and music may lie closer together than what might sometimes be believed.
physicality in the sense used here). This ideological reasoning can be found in post-World War II Europe, and especially Cologne, where composers of both serial and especially electronic music aimed to abstract music from all its emotional and sensuous aspects and expressions, and instead developed compositional methods that explored sound and sound relations scientifically. The art scene in general during this period focused, as M. J. Grant suggests, not on the “what” of art, but on the “how”, and further: “coincident with this tendency was a fascination with the technical, with the geometrical form which had been so central to abstract art earlier in the century; in this context, the non-representational...” (2001, p. 21). The aesthetic ideology of this period can thus be summarised as overly formalistic, an aesthetics inheriting values reaching as far back as to at least Eduard Hanslick’s writings (see below), but which in the post-war climate could bloom into its purist form.

Serial music owes its aesthetic beliefs very much to the advent of electronic music, which unlatched opportunities for creating sounds not possible to make with equally tempered instruments. By electronic means it was now conceivable to separate the sound from its source, and as such the mind-set towards what sound, tone and timbre was, and its relations to nature and the human expression, radically changed. The sine tone, or the “isolated tone”, which cannot be found in nature, was argued to be the purest of sounds, and which ultimately represents veritable abstraction from nature, as we know it. Serial music, as practiced by Karlheinz Stockhausen, Milton Babbitt, Pierre Boulez and many others, was in this sense developing an aesthetic theory primarily aiming at abstracting music from nature, and where the artistic process rather became inspired by technology and predetermined ordering of acoustic material – the ultimately rational and scientific control of sounds (see Grant 2001, pp. 146-149). Music had, through both serial and electronic techniques, evolved towards a purity described with the philosophical concept of Geist (mind/spirit), where “freedom from natural boundaries” was the ultimate goal (ibid, p. 81). This was also a concept already adopted by Krenek, mentioned earlier, who favoured a “mental” use of mathematics in music, in contrast to a physical or natural use (i.e. physics). This would give the composer (or mathematician, in this case) freedom of creativity, and freedom from nature’s limitations (Derkert 2007, p. 228).

One other aspect of this discussion is that of the relationship between the composers and the performers of their music. Samuelsson is known, as will be shown later on, to often be in close collaboration with the musicians who are to perform her music. This is argued to be because the composer is concerned partly of her music to be played, and also because she uses human bodies and instruments as part of the compositional process. This in turn affects the outcome of her music. However, working in collaboration with musicians is not new with Samuelsson, but is a technique that has been occurring for example already with Brahms’ close collaboration with violinist Joseph Joachim. Modernism, on the other hand, was particularly disconnected from its performers; for example, Boulez’s second and third piano sonatas are known to be extremely difficult, and were even too complicated even for the
composer himself to actually play. During the modernist era here discussed, and particularly so for its electronic music compositions, composers had a completely different attitude towards collaborations with musicians and their human (restricted) bodies than found in Samuelsson. Computers allowed for completely new explorations to be made, and were limitless in their possibilities for creating new and ground breaking sounds. With computers it was possible to have their intentions directly (electronically) performed, without being restricted by the imperfections of human performance. Early serialism also reflects this ideological thinking, as many of its compositions are completely unidiomatic and not at all adapted to either the instrument or the musicians’ performance abilities, as Boulez’s piano works just mentioned.

The examples above are a mere excerpt of composers and theoreticians who wrote music and music theory during the mid-twentieth century in what can now be understood as an “intellectual” manner. However, they function as a major representation of this era’s ideological reasoning about music, one that is clearly resisted in Samuelsson’s compositions. The Cartesian prominence of the mind has a noticeable presence in these writings, and although Descartes is not mentioned as an underlying theorist in any of them, it is apparent that the Cartesian dualism has made a strong impression on the philosophical, ontological and epistemological thinking in these composers. Essentially, this is a kind of intellectual super-idealism, where nothing stands above or controls the workings of the human mind. What can also be detected in this musical period is that the compositional methods controlled the aesthetic mentality, and how music is viewed (as Geist or as an example of agential realism) affects the resulting music. The question is therefore whether there is an interconnection between the compositional method and what the music subsequently expresses. Apparent from this period just demonstrated, the mental control over matter was essential to these composers, which resulted in compositions based on this ideology. If, however, the composer would employ a different kind of attitude towards the epistemology and ontology of music, say one based on agential realism, the music would express other things. To understand how music possibly could as in Samuelsson’s case express physicality, in contrast to intellectuality, a turn to some issues in aesthetics of musical meaning and expression is at hand.

4.3. Issues in Musical Meaning and Expression

The section above discussed how music could be composed with intellectual methods, but how music then can be interpreted as intellectual must be explained through musical expression. When discussing the term expression in relation to music, there are several different aesthetic stances one can take, but what is common of most theories is that they in relation to expression also discuss musical meaning. How is it that music can mean different things? Does it even have the ability to express meaning? These are large questions, but one useful starting point when discussing musical expression in accordance with the music theory discussed above is with Eduard Hanslick’s On the Musically Beautiful. Hanslick wanted to
disprove the expression theory in music, saying that music cannot express or represent specific emotions, only some dynamics of feelings, or – ultimately – purely musical ideas (Hanslick 1986 [1854], pp. 9-10). He also famously contended that the “content of music is tonally moving forms” (ibid, p. 29). Hanslick thus represents an idealistic formalism in line with the modernists discussed above, and when leading through two more recent aestheticians, although separated by nearly four decades, and an entire century from Hanslick, it proves a still problematic view on musical meaning and expression.

Monroe Beardsley demonstrates what he calls the “Expression Theory”, in which musical meaning has the formula “X expresses Y … where X is the musical work, or some part of it, and Y is a psychological state or quality” (1981 [1958], p. 325). Thus he would agree with the suggestion that music does have the ability to express, but to explain how it expresses proves more difficult. Beardsley means that, by suggesting music’s ability to express, one could actually have three different things in mind. Firstly, it could imply the “state of mind of the composer”, meaning that if music expresses joy, the composer was in fact feeling joy while composing (which is different from the composer having an intention with her work). This theory is however of no use, since it is impossible to know what the composer (especially if dead) was feeling during the composition process (ibid, p. 326). Secondly, expression in music could mean that the listener feels joy when hearing a particular musical piece. Here “express” is to Beardsley synonymous with “arouse” (ibid, p. 327). This is unfortunately also insufficient for Beardsley, since he means that emotions “involve a conceptual element, an object to which the emotion is directed, and music can present no concepts” (ibid). The last suggestion of Beardsley’s is that the music that expresses joy in fact is joyful. The term “expresses” thus becomes superfluous. What explains how we understand the music as joyful however, remains obscure. Beardsley then summarises the Expression Theory as:

“The composer has objectified (embodied, expressed) joy in his scherzo” means (1) he has been moved by a feeling of joy to compose a scherzo; (2) he has given the scherzo a joyful quality; and (3) the scherzo has the capacity to give him the same feeling of joy when he hears it again, and consequently to give it to others, too. (Ibid, pp. 327-8)

Part 1 and 3 in this definition are, as have already been made clear, either untestable or dubious. Part 2, on the other hand, is the only one worth considering in this situation, and although the statement “the music is joyful” can only be a metaphorical description, it is the closest one can get to musical meaning in Beardsley’s writings.

29 Hanslick would also agree with this statement. See a rendition of his objection of musical representation/expression in Scruton (1997) who writes, “without the object, the feeling cannot be identified” (pp. 165-6).
Roger Scruton offers another theory of musical expression, and he comes to a similar conclusion as Beardsley: both the biographical theory and the evocation theory are incoherent: for a composer to express a state of mind is not the same as *having an intention* with a musical work, and for a listener to feel joy when listening to music is not the same as *sympathising with the feeling of joy* in the act of listening, although that is also a possible result of listening to music (1997, pp. 144-5). Still, having an intention or sympathising with music does not explain *what* the intention is, or *how* we can sympathise with that expression, or *what* is sympathised with specifically. Scruton insists that one must separate the meaning of music from its associations, and that expression in music belongs completely to its “aesthetic character”, and has nothing to do with what a piece of art means to an individual (1997, p. 145). Ultimately, expression in music is to Scruton aesthetic meaning, and to him “[aesthetic] meaning is real but ineffable” (ibid, p. 143).

To comprehend musical expression, one must also attend to musical understanding. Scruton suggests:

> The person who listens to sounds, and hears them as music, is not seeking in them for information about their cause, or for clues as to what is happening. On the contrary, he is hearing the sounds *apart* from the material world. They are detached in his perception, and understood in terms of their experienced order: this is what I [Scruton] have referred to as the acousmatic character of the musical experience (1997, p. 221).³⁰

Although Scruton suggests that when hearing sounds, we hear them apart from the material world, arguing that listening with understanding to Scruton would be something disembodied is not quite accurate. He suggests that music is sounds that can be attended to without needing information about their source. However, regardless of whether the listener is in direct contact with the sound source, or if completely disconnected (as when listening to a stereo), the music can only be understood through metaphors, which are gathered from our material world (ibid, p. 229).³¹ The acousmatic theory disconnects the sound from its source, yet it does not necessarily imply that musical sounds cannot be heard as sourced from the material world, or that music is not experienced (although only metaphorically) through bodies. Despite this

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³⁰ An acousmatic experience of music means there being a separation between sound and cause, referring to Pythagoras lecturing his disciples from behind a screen, as to let them contemplate his words alone and not the man uttering them. French composer Pierre Schaeffer redeployed the term in the mid-twentieth century. See Scruton 1997, pp. 2-3.

³¹ In Scruton’s words: "When we attend to an appearance for its own sake, the world that we have bracketed comes back in another form, as a conceptual order in the thing perceived." Further: "We should never enjoy this experience, if it did not in some way communicate to us the life that is ours – either through representation, or through some system of metaphor which implants our life in the thing that we perceive.” (1997, p. 229). The topic of metaphors is however too extensive to be covered here, and is thus from hereon left aside.
(secondary) connection between the music and our understanding of it through (primary) metaphors, Scruton continues to express the following when discussing musical performance:

It is as though human movements were lifted free from the bodies in which they originate and released into tonal space, there to achieve a togetherness beyond anything that could qualify our bodily life. (Ibid, p. 438-9)

This quote suggests Scruton wanting to free not only music from the material world, but also to free the human movements producing the music from the human bodies to which they are attached. However, Scruton here refers specifically to an improvised performance as a form of creative production, and not to all musical performances. Deniz Peters, whom will be turned to shortly, repudiates this stance of Scruton’s and uses the quote as an offset for his own discussion on bodily expression in music. Whether Scruton would agree with this interpretation of his statement will for now be left aside. It is certain, however, that Scruton stands by a view of musical expression that is free from any direct (only secondary, and less important) bodily expressions in music. Peters, on the other hand, claims musical expression to be in immediate need of, and directly affected by, the matter and bodies of the performers and their instruments.

This section was to establish some, but of course not all, issues concerning musical expression regarding where the expression actually can be detected. Is there really such thing as “the musical expression itself”? If the way we describe music always concerns the arousal in the listener, or the intention of the composer, and if there is no way to really detect musical meaning in the music, then perhaps one must accept that the music in fact happens in the listener, the performer, and in the composer simultaneously, and to talk about musical expression in fact always involves foremost an intersubjective experience (but more on this in the next section). This is a perspective that could have been held by Barad, if she was a music enthusiast, and is in accordance with her suggestion of everything’s “intra-activity” in the world (see Chapter 3).

4.4. Bodily Expression

The expression “physicality in music” is in itself quite ambiguous. Physicality varies in countless ways; it can mean violent, sensitive, slow, intense, etc. (words that are not, in fact, uncommon in vocabularies of musical expression of emotions). All these adjectives are rather specific however, whereas “physicality” certainly is an unspecific description. Still, it is used to describe Samuelsson’s music on several occasions, and the reason for that might be because her music is so diverse from composition to composition. Her music does not just express violence, or intensity: that would be to reproduce the same musical language over and over, which would become rather repetitive and uninteresting. However, to express physicality, and the attraction in doing so, must be something different. Her music is not boring; it is more than divers in sonorities, instrumental setups, harmonies and rhythms. In
some sense, it seems as if her music expresses physicality in general, yet contains other expressions in particular, depending on piece. Yet it is still to be understood how Samuelsson’s music can express more physicality than other composers, and especially in comparison the modernist era that she, as suggested, disapproves of.

Deniz Peters\(^\text{32}\) rejects Scruton’s aesthetics and the acousmatic musical experience and argues that music is in fact a direct expression of the material world, not reliant on metaphors, and as such it is to Peters a highly embodied art form. He writes:

> To make a sound – be it with one’s body, or with a traditional instrument – retains a direct, visible, audible, and tactile link between the human making it and the temporal, timbral, and spatial organisation in this bodily way, a listener, even if not directly involved in the sound making herself, partakes in this game of contact, articulation and withdrawal (2012, p. 17).

In his text, Peters suggests that music is an embodied art form, not only because it is expressed through bodies and matter, but also because sound itself has bodily expressions. Even electronic music has these abilities and, but as shall be argued later, Peters’ theory of touch in electronic music might actually be questionable. The acousmatic musical experience that Scruton suggests would be perfectly exemplified in electronic music, where the performers and acoustic instruments are abstracted from the performance, and where no bodily expression would be left in the music. Even though a live performance of electronic music would have performers on stage, as Peter means, “the heard qualities are physically unbound from the performers’ actions …” (2012, p. 18). Despite this argument, he insists that all music, acoustic as electronic, has a bodily expression that is inextricable and the reason for this is because there is a residue of bodily presence in all organised sounds that we hear. He explains his theory through the concept of touch.

4. 4. 1. Touch

Drawing from the phenomenological theories of Husserl and Merleau-Ponty\(^\text{33}\) Peters argues that composers and performers are themselves listeners. He exemplifies that “when touching ourselves, such as touching one hand with the other, we simultaneously perceive ourselves as

\(^{32}\) Deniz Peters is a music researcher specialised in aesthetics, phenomenology, intermediality, interactive performance, improvisation and more. He is as of spring 2014 holding a post-doc position at the University of Music and Dramatic Arts Graz (Austria) at the Institute for Aesthetics of Music.

\(^{33}\) Merleau-Ponty’s phenomenological writings have been inspiration to various feminist theories since the mid-twentieth century. Most notably is Simone de Beauvoir’s The Second Sex (1997), but also more recent theorists like Iris Marion Young and Sandra Bartky have followed both Merleau-Ponty and de Beauvoir’s footsteps. It is interesting in this context since the underlying ideological theory in this thesis can be argued feminist, and because this ontology of both life and music seem to assimilate.
touching, and touched” (Peters 2012, p. 27). He continues, “[performers] directly, and composers indirectly, engage in this experience of self-touching via the listening experience” (ibid). Touch in this sense does not only refer to the performer literally touching the instrument when playing and the tactility of that action being felt by the listener when watching the performance. If the listener keeps her eyes closed during the performance and only enjoys the “pure” sounds independently of what makes them, one is back to Scruton’s acousmatic theory, and might even believe that the making of music is “obtrusive to the listener experience” (ibid, p. 19). However, Peters means that the literal tactility of the performers is not at all obtrusive, and neither is it the only bodily presence of touch there is in music: several other aspects could explain bodily expression in music as well. To understand this concept, Peters’ explanation must really be retailed in full quotation. He writes:

(1) [We] hear musical gestures other than the performers’ individual and idiomatic playing gestures in the latter, something that would cease if the latter were not organised through the medium of the body; (2) we can be “touched” by music and experience musical chills; (3) there is a hue of haptic experience: music can be and has been described in terms of texture, physiognomy, tactility, and breathing, either in bodily terms (as in having a body), or in terms of visceral experience (as felt in the body); and (4) even when sounds from various sources blend (as in harmony) or fuse sequentially (as in Klangfarbenmelodie), this might be seen as a form of touch outside what is literally done by the performers. These four forms of touch do not take place between players and instruments; they name invisible meetings of bodily presences, with bodies being those of listeners, of the music, and of the sound vibrations and instruments’ sonic identities. (2012, p. 19)

Essentially, Peters means that there are two types of tactility: the first, obvious one is that of the physical performance. The second kind of tactility is the one happening in the listener’s own body (and remember that the composer and performers are listeners too). Even though one might not know the sounds’ source or what instrumental technique that have been used, it is still heard as “touch” (ibid, p. 20). This is because when one hears a sound, one hears something made out of contact and excitation, and to Peters hearing is directly related to the way we experience our bodies. This second tactility is thus “one felt proprioceptively” 34 (ibid).

34 Proprioceptive: “relating to stimuli that are produced and perceived within an organism, especially those connected with the position and movement of the body” (Oxford Dictionaries: Language Matters, 2014). It can also be explained as “an awareness of the body” (Peters 2012, p. 20).
4.4.2. Hearing In and Feeling In

Peters explains this claim through two concepts, namely those of hearing in and feeling in music. The common philosophical understanding of hearing in is that there is an interrelation between motion (and gestures, action and personal expression) in music and the experience of different mental, emotional and psychological states. However, the varying conceptions of this interrelation all fail to explain exactly how specific motions in music actually affect the personal expression in it. Peters means that there is no doubt we can hear the expression of different states in musical motion, but he wants to know how it happens qualitatively (2012, pp. 20-21). Peters finds the first concept in Scruton, who offers a (somewhat insufficient) theory of hearing in music.

To Scruton, “when a sound is heard as music it is experienced under a description that is metaphorical” (Boghossian 2002, p. 50). Although expression in music is aesthetic experience to Scruton, he means that if one were to understand or talk about this experience in any way it can only be through metaphors. However, the metaphors will never be quite sufficient, but somehow this is not an issue to Scruton (see discussion on Scruton in previous chapter). In his theory of musical expression there thus lies a double intentionality, which means that there is a fusion between the metaphor and the music to which it is applied. However, Scruton explains, “it is a mystery that [these metaphors] fit. But the mystery is immovable. Every metaphor both demands an explanation and refuses it, since an explanation would change it from a metaphor to a literal truth, and thereby destroy its meaning” (1997, p. 141). He means that the listener is compelled by metaphors, and the expressive power of the music persuades her that the metaphors fit exactly. There is a problem with this argument though, and that is in whether one could ever actually speak of music in metaphors (or in any descriptive language that would, if possible, consist of something other than metaphors) and say anything meaningful at all. Paul Boghossian, who Peters includes in his text, also points out the shortcoming in Scruton’s argument. He means that metaphorical experience of music in Scruton’s sense remains inexplicable, and that there is no way of “[exiting] the circle of metaphors that constitute musical experience” (Boghossian 2002, p. 52).

As such, hearing in music has as of yet no clear explanation of how one can hear definite mental and emotional (or even physical) states in music. The insufficient metaphors only provide inklings of what is a heard, not any exact definition. However, by adding the second aspect of Peters concept, namely that of feeling in, one might get closer to an understanding of how this vocabulary of music actually could be sufficient. As an extension of hearing in, feeling in is another dimension of musical experience that is grounded in the body. This could mean either the “felt correlation between rhythmically organised sound and bodily rhythm”, “a viscerality of musical experience”, “where a listener supposedly mirrors the performer’s excitation – mainly on subvocal imitation – that is, a silent vocal mimicking” or lastly, the “implicit tactility and bodily aspects of listening to timbre, texture, and the voice” (Peters 2012, p. 21). To Peters however, it still remains obscure as to how bodily experience of music
is actually constituted if only discussing feeling in, just as hearing in did not deliver an obvious solution. He is certain though, that hearing in and feeling in are inextricably linked, and by returning to the phenomenological idea of touch this section started out with, Peters suggests an understanding of touch that would resolve this issue.

Peters is focusing primarily on the phenomenological theories of perception developed by Merleau-Ponty.\(^{35}\) In his writings, Merleau-Ponty argues that mind and body are not separated between a physical and metaphysical realm, as has been believed in philosophy for centuries (disapproving of the mind-body dichotomy, and arguing in line with Barad’s agential realism). Rather, he suggests that body and mind are always intertwined and that our bodily perception can extend into the environment just as much as the environment extends into our bodies. Peters gives the example of a violinist extending her touch from the bow through to the strings of the instrument, and thus embodies the violin with this prolonged touch (2012, p. 22).

The “lived body”, in Merleau-Ponty’s sense, is one that perceives space through both haptic and visual perception, and is thus a “place of synaesthetic experience” (ibid). With our lived bodies we have the ability to extend into sounds, Peters suggests. This is because, when making a sound, we get a haptic experience of it, but when hearing sounds alone, “unthinkingly, our lived body suggests potential feelings, as if we made those sounds ourselves. Auditory perception invites us to extend and feel into the heard, in a sort of haptic completion” (ibid). Importantly, Peters points out that he does not mean to feel the sounds as if we were imitating the performers. He rather suggests that the listening experience is “an animation of the heard”, not of what is seen of the performance. The feeling of the sound can actually be counterintuitive to how the sound is produced, for example a sustained sostenuto tone from a piano that is produced by a pressed pedal, not a continuous movement. Yet the feeling of the sound would be as if it was continuously made through an invisible touch sustaining the sound, and we would hear it just as our bodies or voices would produce a similar sustained sound (ibid).

Through tactility we thus hear and feel literal gestures in music. In Peters’ view, “we listen (like we see) as if touching...” (ibid, p. 23). He calls this phenomenon “active completion”, which “occurs from the lived body, as the lived body holds within it knowledge of possible gestures, part of a bodily intentionality as conceived by Merleau-Ponty. As we listen, the gestures’ potentiality continually becomes a bodily actuality, forming felt shapes of sonic motions” (ibid). There is a kind of involuntary imagination of gestures happening in the act of listening, which occurs simultaneously as the bodily experience of music. These literally felt but imaginatively enacted gestures are to Peters “fundamental to the intersubjectivity of

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\(^{35}\) See Merleau-Ponty’s *Phenomenology of Perception* (1945).
musical experience”. He continues, “[a] composer draws on her experience of such gestures in conceiving a work to be performed; a performer draws on her working knowledge of such gestures to enrich the underdetermined score with articulation and expressive plasticity; and a listener brings to the listening experience her lifetime experience of such gestures, and their affective charge” (ibid, pp. 24-25). This last sentence is key to the aesthetics attempted to develop here. It means that independently of what role one has in a musical experience (as composer, performer or listener), one will have a mutual experience with the other agents. Importantly though, it is not to say that the music is or must be experienced exactly the same. As such, the hearing in and feeling in happens simultaneously, in all actors involved, but the final experience and especially the interpretation of a musical piece can still vary between the agents. However, as was shown in Chapter 2 on the reception of Samuelsson’s music, there seems to be a mutual understanding between the composer, performers and listeners that her music has certain qualities, and the reason for why they all understand it as such can thus be explained with Peters’ theory and the intersubjectivity of the musical experience.

4. 4. 3. Touch in Electronic Music

So far, Peters’ theory has only been suggesting music that involves a physical performance. What happens when there are no performers, as in electronic music, or when listening to a recording? This last section will discuss the altered conditions of production and reception for the composer, the performer and the listener in the advent of electronic music. Although most of Samuelsson’s music that will be discussed is acoustic, this theory of Peters’ is key for the understanding of touch in music and how, in all kinds of music, more or less bodily expression can be heard.

In electronic music, the roles can be seen as shifted concerning whose bodily presence is heard/felt in the music. When the performer is abstracted, as common in electronic music, the composer may work on the sound objects more carefully, and organises the sounds directly. Compare that to a notation based composition, where it is depending on the performer to develop the final interpretation and expression of the music. When composing electronically, it is more likely, Peters argues, that the composer’s own bodily gestures affect the final musical product more immediately. However much bodily presence that appears in electronic music though, “is a matter of artistic achievement” according to Peters. He continues, “[whether] to include or abandon bodily expression is an aesthetic decision” (2012, p. 29, my italics). What exactly this aesthetic decision could entail is in Peters not clear. However, an aesthetic decision will later on be argued to correlate with the method used in the compositional process, musical ideology, and which directly relates to the final musical expression, a key argument for this posthumanist aesthetics.

36 Denis Smalley writes extensively on musical gestures and aesthetics and displays various “levels” in electronic music where different types of gestures can be detected (see Smalley 1996, pp. 77-107).
Alva Noë, who appears in the same book as Peters, agrees with his theory of touch. However, she also suggests that the proposition “I hear a sound as if I were making it, could make it or might make it” is not quite enough, and she wants to develop Peters’ concept. She means that sounds are the actions making them (Noë 2012 p. 59). “Maybe we should think of sounds as, in a sense, features or expressions of the things and events around us in the world” (Noë 2012 p. 59). This statement is interesting in two ways: firstly, it questions the acousmatic theory that Peters means is not existent, not even in electronic music. It could be argued that the acousmatic theory only functions when information is added to the music, and that something other than the music itself is needed to understand it as music. Where would the bodily presence then be, if the actions that make the sounds were completely computer generated, for example? 37 Perhaps Peters would here argue that because humans create computers, there would be bodily residues in that music as well, because of the bodily residues of humans in the computers or in the programmes generating the sounds. The acousmatic theory is a notable shortcoming in Peters’ theory, especially concerning electronic music, but a solution to the problem is not at hand here. The question of whether acousmatic musical understanding is a facticity or not will thus not be further developed.

The second reason for why Noë’s statement is noteworthy is because it brings this theory close to an agential realist account of music. If sounds are always “expressions of the things and events around us in the world”, this means that the modernist account of music as Geist, or even Hanslick’s “tonally moving forms”, is no longer valid or effective. Rather, it is much more suggestible that, with this attitude at least, a bodily expression in music is very much possible, and especially so if the composer consciously chooses to employ such compositional methods where these expressions become visible. What those compositional methods might be will be discussed in the next chapter, and contrasted to the modernist techniques explained above, but first a summary of this posthumanist aesthetics is at hand.

37 One interesting scientifically studied theory that would contest the theory Peters suggests, i.e. bodily expression being immanent in all musical expression, even electronic music, would be the one implemented by Steinbeis and Koelsch in their study of subjects who listen to electronic music composed by human composers (Schoenberg and Webern namely) and completely computer generated compositions. The aim of the study was to see if the subjects’ brain activity changed depending on whether they listened to music by a composer or to that of a computer. Brain activity turned out to change depending on the information they were given before listening, which sometimes corresponded truly to what they were listening to, and sometimes they were given the “wrong” information. Their result contests that the subjects were incapable of hearing any difference between music created by a composer and a computer, and a certain part of the brain was only triggered when the subjects thought they were listening to music created by a human. In their words, “…our findings clearly demonstrate for the first time, that the attitude alone taken toward a stimulus as social or not is responsible for the increased activations in the neural network underlying mental state attribution” (Steinbeis, Koelsch 2009, p. 622). The brain is thus seen as part of the body, and the body is activated depending on the information that is given to the brain.
4. 5. A Posthumanist Musical Aesthetics

This chapter has explained how bodily expression in music is possible, as well as created an understanding of what intellectual music might be. Thus, in contrast to the modernist aesthetics, what a posthumanist aesthetics might be should by now at least be implicitly clear. It is a theory that values the body (and matter) of and in music, and in combining agential realism with the concept of touch, an aesthetic of physicality in music has been developed.

Music from an agential realist account suggests first of all that an objective interpretation of music is impossible. However, an experience can appear similar in the different agents of a musical event (the composer, performer and listener), which suggests an intersubjective experience of music to be possible. Therefore, it is legitimate so say that music can express states or feelings, without meaning that opinions always have to be completely subjective, i.e. they can be intersubjective observations. Moreover, if music has (or in fact does) agency, as suggested earlier, it means music can also affect the world around us simultaneously as it creates it and is created in it. In its constant intra-activity with the different agents of music making, this intersubjective experience as well as creation of the music is possible. This reasoning decentres the composer as sole creator of the music, although she might hold the initial idea. But for that idea to become reality the composer has to step back and let other agents and/or matter to take part in the creative process. Thus, just as posthumanism proclaims a decentring of the human, and a refusal of complete objectivity in science, so does an agential realist account of music insist on the creative process to be shared between the composer, performer and listener (and corporeality) in an intersubjective experience of the musical event – an experience which can come through as both similar and dissimilar between the agents depending on their differing musical life experiences.

All music is an expression, not only of our bodies, but also of corporeality, regardless of whether acoustically or electronically sourced material is used. Barad’s theory shows us how matter matters, and it has been explained how matter matters in music too. Further, when comparing Peter’s concept of touch and how music is an expression of matter with that of modernism’s purist aesthetics, the one developed here suggests music to always be an expression of the material world and of real bodies. How is it that the music of Samuelsson and that of modernism differs in expression then, if all music is physical in some sense? It seems as if the ideological reasoning of the composer affects the compositional methods used, which in turn affects the outcome of the music. As Peters claims, whether more or less bodily expression in music is included is an aesthetic decision made by the composer. What this aesthetic decision could be will be explained in the next chapter on the analyses of Samuelsson’s music. It is only an assumption, however, that Samuelsson composes her music with the attitude of an agential realist, but it is still valid to make this assumption because the theory of agential realism helps in the understanding of why it might be important to have this ideology, and what musical expressions can reflect that ideology.
At last, there are two important aspects that can be extracted from the theories demonstrated above: firstly, depending on the aesthetic ideology one chooses to believe in, whether that is a belief in music as Geist or music as agential realism, the material composed out of this choice will reflect that ideology. Secondly, and perhaps most importantly, for the Cartesian mind-body problem to be solved or at least considered, the physicality of music must not be seen as a substitute for intellectuality. Music cannot be composed completely without a human mind acting in the foreground, as some kind of intellectual activity is always at hand in the compositional process. In this sense, music is a solution to the mind-body problem in itself, but can be explicitly so, and interpreted as such, when composed with certain methods and ideological background beliefs. To emphasise physicality in music is to balance over the scale to methods that value bodily expressions and as such make up for the former strong emphasis on intellectual compositional techniques. Neither mind nor body can ever be neglected in musical composition, but there is always a choice of what states one wants to express, arouse and affect.

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38 This might be dubious when speaking of composers working with chance operations, but even then there is a person offering pre-considered setups to create randomised compositions, and who is still limited by nature and technology’s boundaries.
5. The Music of Marie Samuelsson

5. 1. Introduction

Although modernism’s compositional techniques made the music express intellectuality and as coming from the mind, it was never completely separated from the material world, at least not from a posthumanist aesthetic perspective. When there is a conscious choice to express physicality, however, other compositional techniques must be at hand. As this chapter will explain, these compositional techniques differ from those used in the mid-twentieth century. Samuelsson’s music is what can be called post-tonal: not completely atonal, but not following the principles of tonality either. However, this analysis section will not look at pitch-class sets or harmonic progressions, but instead focus on compositional methods and processes as well as some musical elements that can be interpreted as expressing physicality and bodily states. This is to say that while intellectual compositional methods might very well exist in Samuelsson’s works, it is not of her main interest to express, and as such, it is not of main interest to look for in these analyses.

The reason Samuelsson’s music is physical or bodily can ultimately be argued to be because of the way she uses instruments, and the way she develops pieces specifically for the qualities of the instruments, together with the abilities of the performers. The following quote suggest Samuelsson to consciously work with compositional processes that aim to explore both the possibilities and limitations of human performance as well as different sonorities derivative of all kinds of material (matter):

She often works closely to the musicians who will interpret her music. Her compositional work can therefore be described as a process where she explores sound vocalities and rhythms, and how they affect and interact with each other … Her sources of inspiration are often sound ideas. (Stålhammar 2009, p. 111)39

Working in collaboration with a professional will make a musical composition specifically adapted for that instrument. Thus it is expressing physicality, in a way, because it is the movement of the instrument that we are hearing, extended through the touch of the performer, as well as we hear the movement of the performer herself. It can also be argued that Samuelsson works in collaboration, not only with musicians, but also with the actual instruments and/or other material things from which sonorities can be derived. This has just as much effect on the music as it would be working with a professional musician, as it gives the opportunity to explore the possibilities and limitations of those instruments and materials. If

39 “Hon arbetar ofta nära de musiker som skall tolka hennes musik. Hennes komponerande kan därför beskrivas som en process där hon utforskar ljudklanger och rytmer – hur dessa påverkar och interagerar med varandra … Hennes inspirationskällor är ofta ljudidéer.” (My translation)
modernist art was interested in the “how”, it can be argued that Samuelsson is just as much, if not more, interested in the “what” of music. (See Chapter 4, and the discussion on modernism and the attitude towards collaborations with matter and human bodies especially in electronic music.)

5. 1. 1. Method of Analysis

Music composed with methods concentrated on the formal content of music, ordering of tones such as twelve-tone music, or other kinds of systemisations for the organisation of tones requires an intellectual compositional process which deconstructs musical material into individual components. As suggested from a posthumanist aesthetic account, this music will also contain expressions of intellectuality, since the compositional process directly affects the resulting music and thus also its expression. It can either start with an aim to express such states, or the composer might be more interested in composition as a scientific study, and the resulting music is merely a by-product of that investigation. Similarly, a composer might be interested in expressing states of physicality, and as such, the compositional method must differ from those just mentioned. Or, moreover, music composed with methods exploring different movements and capacities of humans and matter in real time performance will also affect the resulting music. The intersubjectivity of the musical experience this posthumanist aesthetics suggests, reaching from the composer through the performer/instrument/matter to the listener, proposes a direct connection between compositional process and method (in the case of both modernism and a posthumanist aesthetics affected by ideological reasoning), the musical expression and the resulting musical experience. The analysis method used in this chapter will thus reflect the posthumanist aesthetics developed and look at aspects such as:

- Compositional process/method – what initialises a musical idea and how is it actualised
- Instruments and extended techniques – exploring sounds through new objects and uses
- Musical material – working with the “what” as much as the “how”
- Music from a listener perspective – how the musical experience can be affected by the above mentioned factors

5. 2. Music Examples

The works by Samuelsson here chosen for analysis are to exemplify how bodily expressions in music can take different forms. The pieces that will be analysed are Lufttrumma III for orchestra, Ö for solo violin and Fantasia i cirkel for ensemble. The analyses will include a few score examples, however, these are only to show some general uses of playing techniques and uses of the different instruments, and not to exemplify specific harmonic material or structural analyses.
On the CD *Air Drum*, which features both *Lufttrumma III* and *Ö*, novelist and poet Eva Runefelt has written the description of the composer and her work. In the booklet, Runefelt describes Samuelsson’s music with one word: *irresistibility*. She writes: “[not] just the adjective form of the word, that would be too soft and free of friction; no, it must be the noun, for it contains both magnetism and power to the same extent” (2003, p. 17). The poet continues:

The driving force in Marie Samuelsson’s music is her feeling for rhythm and timbre, which takes its cue from the world around us as well as creating it. In Samuelsson’s landscape, rhythms and pulses coexist with the sonorous constellations these pulses incessantly bump into and take on. This encounter is the point of departure, the character result of thought and body becoming one. The works generate physically evident architectural sound sculptures around the pulsing heart of the constantly present rhythm. The starting point for it all, the sine qua non, is constant motion. (Runefelt 2003, p. 18)

This quote presents several key ideas about Samuelsson’s music for this thesis. The first one concerns the expression of her music having a “feeling for rhythm and timbre, which takes its cue from the world around us as well as creating it”. This strongly relates to Barad’s theory of an “agential realism”. The second one is that “thought and body [are] becoming one”, which also highly relates to Barad’s theory, as well as it questions a Cartesian dualism in music. The third expression, that Samuelsson’s “works generate *physically evident* architectural sound sculptures” (my italics), is perhaps the most abstract and difficult to explain. It is to say that Samuelsson’s compositions somehow have the ability to create discernible models of sound that is perceivable not only to the ear, but also to the eye – or in fact – to the tactility of the whole body.

The compositional process has also been noted in writings on the composer. Samuelsson’s interest often lies in exploring original sonorities, and as Stålhammar puts it:

The work process is often initiated by sound ideas being processed and matured. This can proceed during a longer period. Common, concrete sounds, which are found in our surroundings, can induce ideas that become incitements for a new composition. This, of course, happens in combination with will and thought. (Stålhammar 2009, p. 114-5)\(^{40}\)

\(^{40}\) “Arbetsprocessen inleds ofta med att vissa ljudidéer bearbetas och mognar fram. Detta kan pågå under en längre tid. Vanliga konkreta ljud, som finns runtomkring oss, kan ge upphov till idéer som sedan blir impulser för en ny komposition. Detta sker förstås i kombination med vilja och tanke.” (My translation)
Thus, this analysis section will focus on what those compositional processes might have been, and how those have affected the resulting music, and with a particular interest in how musicians’ bodies and instruments or other objects’ abilities can explore and realise expressions of physicality, but at the same not forgetting that composition is always to some degree an intellectual process.

5.2.1. Lufttrimma III (Air Drum III), 2000

The most spectacular feature of this orchestral piece is, unsurprisingly, the authentic airshafts, or here called air drums, and the composer explains her intention with these:

    The idea is to reuse objects from our time, a kind of “recycling”, explore and musicalise these sounds into an orchestra and its traditional instruments. (Samuelsson 2007, p. 28)\(^{41}\)

Samuelsson is interested in what happens when using new material to create sonorities – here the compositional method consisted of exploring the sound of the air drums, and what happens when an orchestra gets the opportunity to create surroundings that complement this sound. She also seems urgent to express our present time through objects from our contemporary surroundings, thus creating what can be called a posthumanist aesthetic experience – one that combines a primal and physical drumming with urban material and which literally creates an expression of the world of, in and around us.

The three air drums are 2 meters high rectangular columns in sheets of metal. The percussionists are instructed to play standing upright and turned towards the air drum’s broadside, and all the playing should be practiced with raised, slightly bent arms, centred around 10 centimetres above eye-level (Samuelsson 2000). In the score there also follows a precise description of how the drums are to be positioned in the concert hall, and the placing is crucial “… so that their acoustic sound can ‘wander’ from one air drum to the next” (ibid).\(^{42}\) Although there are three air drums, it seems that they are to be heard and perceived as a conjoined sonority. The live performance is in all likelihood important for this piece, because the visual experience has a great impact on the listener – it is theatrical, in a sense. But even by hearing the piece in headphones the tactility of the air drums might also be transferred to the listener. If this is the case, it can be explained with Peters’ concept of touch and the involuntary imagination of gestures happening in the act of listening, even though the listener might not be aware of what kind of matter is creating the sounds (see Chapter 4).

\(^{41}\) “Idén är att återanvända ting från vår tid, en form av ’recycling’, utforska och musikalisera dess ljud in i orkestern och dess traditionella instrument.” (My translation)

\(^{42}\) “… så att dess ljud akustiskt kan ’vandra’ från den ena lufttrumman till den andra.” (My translation)
The rhythmic air drums pervade the music as an underlying hunter chasing the different voices of the wind and string instruments. They also create a tangible physical sound, which is created by the percussionists’ playing either with banging fists, custom-made sticks with rubber balls, metal whisks or sticks on the air drums’ sides – apparent even though one would not be in possession of any score details. In some sections the percussionists are even instructed to muzzle the drums with one of their legs. Their entire bodies are thus incorporated in the playing, and even though no specific technical skills are required that exceeds an experienced percussionist’s abilities, it is rather unusual for a performer to make their bodies so apparent and manifested in an orchestral performance. Moreover, Samuelsson’s contrasting use of the orchestral instruments and their capabilities manages to both match and enhance the sound of the air drums in this piece. The haunting glissandi, appearing mostly in the low registered strings and trombones (but also in high registered wind, but then with slightly different, frightened connotations), is complementing the air drum waves, whereas the flutter tongued flute, clarinets, trumpets and pizzicato strings contrast the drums with a fragility that makes the force of the drums even more apparent (see Appendix example 1, where the air drums play glissandi with the plastic ball beaters, followed by the French horns, trumpets and trombones playing a glissando down by a minor second, succeeded with flutter tongue flutes and preparing for the air drums to rhythmically take charge again). The listening experience of this piece can thus be argued to actually discern Samuelsson’s intention with these drums – the intention of juxtaposing the distinct physical force of the air drum sounds with the delicacy of the traditional orchestra.

With only around 5 minutes in duration, this is a rather short piece for being an orchestral work, yet Samuelsson manages to include those aspects of the air drums with complements in the traditional orchestra that are interesting to explore, without fully showering the listener with these sometimes overwhelming sonorities. Essentially, the ideological idea behind this piece can be argued to be a wish for exploring sound, and of the human physical action of making a sound possible. The contrast between the metal air drums – an industrial and urban symbolisation – with the rhythmic, primal drumming with the entire bodies of the percussionists create a somewhat emphasised feeling of delicacy and at the same time stability of a physical reality. The sounding drums are like one large body in and of themselves, chasing and threatening the other voices of the orchestra. Foreboding and strong, this piece expresses a physicality that is not only of human bodies, but also of our contemporary environment – one which sometimes can seem massive and overtaking, but also inevitably part of our present reality. In this piece, Peters’ suggestion that the “felt correlation between rhythmically organised sound and bodily rhythm” is particularly applicable, and if intersubjectively experienced through the different agents’ knowledge of gestures, it certainly seems as if the emphasised sonorities of the air drums will affect the listener as such (2012, p. 21).
5. 2. Ö (Island), 2002

If the composition just discussed was an exploration in new instruments and sonorities, the most interesting aspect of this piece can be argued to be its creation through the compositional process. The Swedish Art Grant Committee awarded Samuelsson with a grant that involved a collaboration violinist Anna Lindal, and the solo piece Ö can be seen as in many respects marked by that partnership. The composer consciously used a particular human body to create the music with, and as such, the music can be argued as “custom made” for Anna Lindal, whose technical skills correspond to and even exceeds a professional violinist’s abilities, yet Ö also inheres Lindal’s personal musical touch. Working in collaboration with musicians and conductors is important to Samuelsson, and she means that the work has to come with “understanding and respect”, meaning that a compositional process is one which needs to correspond with both the composer’s vision and the musicians’ abilities (Stålhammar 2009, p. 117). This shows a concern in Samuelsson to write pieces that are “playable” (in contrast to Boulez, mentioned before). However, it does not mean that her pieces are simple or compromised – Ö is a great example of where collaboration with a talented musician can lead to a technically challenging composition.

The composer writes of her work:

Musical conflicts, melodies and interruptions are here congregated in two voices that relate to each other in a solo. The inspiration is gathered from a bare island, where vegetation insistently tries to survive in the midst of the rocky environment, surrounded by an infinite sea. (Samuelsson 2007, p. 24)43

The letter Ö is both the last letter in the Swedish alphabet as well as it means island. The choice of name for this piece can thus be interpreted as a concluding, finite study, where nothing else comes after the finishing tone. But to Samuelsson it also stands for a desert environment, where one voice is never really one alone, but echoes, however lonely it might be, in its bleak surroundings until that single voice grows into two. It can be argued that the two voices heard in this solo piece present a conversation between the instrument and the performer. The sudden down bows, accented double stops – always with the dissonant interval of a semitone, tone or a ninth – and aggressive sextuplet ostinatos interrupt the melodic lines of the more uncertain yet gentle voice of sporadic melodies, drills and natural and artificial harmonics (see Appendix example 2, particularly bar 58-63 where there are sharp shifts between dissonant double stops, melodic lines and a soft harmonic). Evident here is the rapid change in playing techniques, which requires a certain level of skill from the

43 “Musikaliska motstridigheter, melodier och avbrott samlas här i två stämmor som relaterar till varandra i ett solo. Inspirationen kommer från en karg ö där växtligheten enträget försöker överleva mitt i det steniga omgivet av oändligt hav.” (My translation)
musician, and since Samuelsson has worked together with Lindal in the process of composing, there is no doubt that Lindal’s special abilities have been transferred into the composition.

Perhaps the two voices should not be called voices at all, but a mind and a body: the mind belongs to the performer, who controls the instrument and urgently strives forward, and the instrument is the body, which, although extended through the performer, disturbs what comes out of the former with interrupting responses. As such, it is not only the mind of Lindal we hear, but also the body of her violin. Perhaps such an argument could be made with all solo pieces of all instruments, and perhaps it yet again enforces a divide between mind and body.

However, if considering the performer and the instrument as one unified entity in its togetherness, it becomes obvious that a separation is impossible – the music cannot be unless both mind and body unite. Yet, if considering Peters’ notion of bodily expression in music being an aesthetic choice, Ö appears as a decent example of where such a choice has been made, palpable through the emphasis on a particular musician’s mind/body and her musical relationship with an instrument (see also Appendix example 3 where this relationship intensifies and finally comes to an abrupt end). The different timbres created with the same performer and instrument are here constantly shifting between each other, and it really is as if the music has two agents who wants to express themselves simultaneously, but neither wants to give the other one the word or musical space for too long. Neither mind nor body has prominence in this piece, but both are simultaneously in conflict with each other and at the same time completely dependent on one another. In a way, Samuelsson has thus managed to question the mind-body problem in this piece for solo violin, and from a listener perspective it can be argued that the musical experience involves an identification of this dualistic conflict, but which becomes united in the moment to moment musical progression, powered by the fact that Lindal’s body and physical abilities are directly transferred to the music.

5. 2. 3. Fantasia i cirkel (Fantasia in a Circle), 2011

… the sonorities become human, as they talk to each other in a quivering serenity… (Nyström 2011)\textsuperscript{44}

This piece is an exploration of the “what” as much as of the “how”. Extended techniques are used in instruments (flute, violin, violoncello and piano) to show the capacity they inhere, but also to create new sonorities with familiar material (matter). In the score instructions the

\textsuperscript{44} “… klangerna blir mänskliga när de liksom talar med varandra runt en självande [sic!] stillhet …” (My translation)
piano is to be prepared with open lid and an “e-bow”\textsuperscript{45} placed on different strings, as well as some strings are to be played upon with a “special mallet with a rubber ball head (a bouncing ball for children) plugged and glued with a stick (a yarn knit)” (Samuelsson 2012).

The use of extended techniques is not a revolutionary practice, but what makes this piece interesting is the variation between the “what” and the “how”. Samuelsson explores both the sound possibilities of different instruments as well as their interaction (/intra-action) with each other – not at all like modernism that was only interested in the “how”, and in what structural and abstract principles could be used to construct a piece. In this composition there is great concern for the instruments’ cooperativeness, but at the same time their individual abilities. Fantasia i cirkel is physical in the sense that it is spontaneous and improvisational, as might be expected of a fantasia composition, yet meticulously composed and executed. The sounds are composed partly through improvisations, and Samuelsson means that she wanted to explore the sound possibilities of all instruments, treating them as individuals both contrasting and complementing each other (Gehrmans 2012). (However, improvisation in this case most likely meant experimenting with the instruments, especially the piano’s sonic possibilities when a few simple devices are implemented, and not letting the performers improvise in a live performance.) Natural harmonics are frequently used in the other three instruments as well, creating a pure sound complementing the e-bow notes of the piano. The flute is also often instructed to play with aeolian (air) sounds with more or less tune, and this technique particularly creates an expression of tactility, since one can hear the breathing air of the musician through the flute (more than you do with “normal” playing, at least). Together these techniques produce sonorities filled with both bodily and artificial expressions, yet the overall appreciation of the piece is physical and alive, and perceived so through the interchanging playing techniques and the sharp contrasts between them.

The different voices work independently of each other, yet they gather around centres that unite them in one musical body – it is as if the different voices sometimes take over each other’s phrases and finish each other’s sentences. It can be suggested that Samuelsson has aimed to embody these instruments and give them different personalities, so to speak, yet unify them in one collective group striving towards the same goal. The music centres around four different sustained e-bow notes held in the piano, moving through the piece from an E-flat, to C-sharp, F-sharp and finally G-sharp. The other instruments occasionally deviate from this tone centre, but always return to the same note as to create unity, not in harmony, but in unison. This makes the instruments sometimes seem like one large entity, with a collective sonority unique for this instrumentation (see Appendix example 4, where the music is preparing for and then entering the “F-sharp section”). This piece is not rhythmic and primal

\textsuperscript{45}An e-bow or electronic bow is a device attached to piano or guitar strings and makes it possible to create continuous string vibrations, or bourdon/everlasting tones.
like *Lufttrumma III* – rather the opposite – and neither is it a study in a specific musician’s musical skills like Ö. Perhaps the most intriguing aspect of this piece is the desire to see the piano, cello, violin and flute as different persons, embodied through the matter of their instruments and expressed as individuals through the music. Essentially it can be argued that, as Peters would suggest, the musical touch in this piece does not only come across through the literal tactile meetings between the instruments and performers, but also through the listeners partaking of the bodily presence of “the sound vibrations and instruments’ sonic identities” (Peters 2012, p. 19).

Both the performers and the instruments here becomes the “apparatuses” (see Chapter 3 above), which not only creates the physical framework within which the music can come to life, but also actively affect the musical expression so that the result of these compiled apparatuses is immediately recognised in the listener. From a posthumanist perspective, this piece makes apparent the inextricable link between the material reality of the performers and instruments’ bodies, the intention of the composer as well as the resulting music. This can be explained by suggesting these apparatuses/instruments having, long before, been created for a predefined purpose, but which have through the use of complementary devices and extended playing techniques changed the framework within which the music is created (or studied through). It thus becomes particularly evident that the instruments are used as a way of coming to new conclusions. Of course every musical composition is an original exploration in sound and expression, but this piece particularly emphasises the different apparatuses’ purposes and how they can be extended and contorted – as such experienced in the listener because of the emphasised individuality of the different instruments, the contrasts between them, as well as their musical unification through certain timbres and sonorities. However, the human bodily expression is appearing every now and then especially in the aeolian flute sounds, which makes it particularly evident that Samuelsson is interested in expressing the bodily/corporeal possibilities in her music. In Peters’ opinion, this could mean that the music is a direct expression of the composer’s intention and curiosity to explore the physical possibilities of different instruments when used in new ways.
6. Conclusion

6.1. Summary

This thesis has gone through several stages of research to come to the following conclusions. The first stage was regarding the collection of statements made by composer Marie Samuelsson and by critics of her music that all corresponded to a uniform idea. These statements in turn awakened several questions about musical expression and the ontology of music. How is it that music can express physicality, and in what musical elements can this take form? And how can some music express more physicality than other, if considering the ontology of music to always be directly dependent on corporeality? The second stage involved researching the matter of matter, and if a (in fact scientific) theory could assist in understanding the importance of matter and bodies in music. This section also covered some issues especially in feminist theory and music where the separation of mind and body has been seen as problematic. The theory of Barad’s agential realism was explained and then translated into musical terms to create a context in which the matter of music could be comprehended and valued. By applying this theory onto music it became evident that the ontology of music must be seen as something corporeal and that music has (does) agency in our corporeality.

When turning to the purist and intellectual aesthetics of modernism, it became evident that some composers from this period had completely different ideological views on music, which valued mostly the abstract and transcendental aspect of music. Compositional methods focusing on mathematical formulas and the structural content of music etc. created an expression that corresponded to their musical ideologies, since compositional methods affect expression directly as envisaged through the translation of Barad’s terms into a musical ontological context. The intersubjectivity of the musical experience shared between composer, performer and listener suggests that the compositional method and ideological reasoning directly affects the musical outcome. Issues of some aesthetic theories of expression were then exemplified, which established musical expression as something no other than music expressed as music, and according to the writings of Hanslick, Beardsley and Scruton it was argued to be impossible to actually determine musical expression. In contrast to the issues of these aesthetic theories, Peters’ concept of musical touch was presented that assisted with an understanding of bodily expressions in music and of how the composer, the performer and the listener are involved in a phenomenological experience of touch in the act of music making and listening. Ultimately, these musical experiences were suggested to be “invisible meetings of bodily presences” (Peters 2012, p. 19).

In combining some aspects of Barad’s agential realism with those of Peters’ concept of touch, a posthumanist aesthetics was develop, as well as an understanding of how the mind-body problem in music could be, perhaps not solved, but at least considered. Turning to some musical examples from Samuelsson’s repertoire, several aspects of the posthumanist
aesthetics were explored and exemplified, which showed how bodily expressions in music can be valued and demonstrated as well as the importance for a composer to include such expressions. Following this aesthetic theory, it has been shown how musical ideology affects what a composer is interested in exploring sonically and/or methodologically, and how that affects the compositional method used. Moreover, it showed how such compositional method in combination with ideology affects the outcome of the music, and how the composer, performer and listener in an intersubjective musical experience can perceive the music similarly – since they are all part of the music making in an on-going intra-activity. Finally, although expressions of both intellectuality and physicality are necessary for music to exist, whether to include either of these expressions in music is an aesthetic decision made by the composer.

6.2. Evaluation and Results

The translation and application of Karen Barad’s agential realism onto a musical ontological context as realised in this thesis have proved its usefulness, as it has not only shown how matter matters in the understanding of music, but also why it is important, not least from a gender perspective, to have this ideological perspective. Although it might have seemed farfetched to use a non-musicological theory as a substantial part of the theoretical framework for this thesis, the consequence of using Barad’s theory can still be argued successful, as it has given new and insightful meaning to this posthumanist musical aesthetics. As the character of agential realism is so openly applicable, and works as both a gender and science theory, music does after all not seem too afield and extraneous to such theoretical reasoning.

Deniz Peters’ theory on the other hand has proved both useful and dubious. His concept of touch created an understanding of how musical expression can be affected by the bodily tactility of both the composer, the performer, the listener and in fact of the instruments, which was valuable especially in the analyses of Samuelsson’s music. As the analyses showed, bodily expressions can thus be experienced in various ways, some more direct as in Lufttrumma III and Ö where the bodily presence of the performers is more evident, whereas Fantasia i cirkel contains a more indirect bodily presence expressed through the instruments’ bodies/matter. When considering hearing in and feeling in, it became evident that music is always experienced through one’s body, both by listening and using one’s bodily knowledge of gestures to understand the music as music. It can thus be said of Samuelsson’s music that feeling in is particularly important for the musical bodily experience evident through her particular emphasis on expressions of bodies and matter, yet hearing in must always remain a part of the listening to complete the experience.

However, one shortcoming in Peters is that he never actually states what musical elements a composer can use when wanting to specifically express physicality in her music, but this issue was resolved by comparing Samuelsson’s music with some ideologies expressed during the modernist era. As such, the aesthetic decision to exclude or include bodily expressions in
music was argued to be dependent on the compositional method used as well as musical ideology held by the composer. One other problematic part of Peters’ theory is that he never clearly resolves the issue of the acousmatic musical experience, and what happens with the bodily expressions in music when it is completely electronic or computer generated. As none of Samuelsson’s works exemplified were electronic though, this issue was left aside. It does raise some questions however, considering acousmatic listening and the listener’s knowledge of bodily gestures when experiencing music. To leave this issue aside, it can be argued that perhaps the listening experience does not always have to cohere with the composer’s intention, but if the composer has particular interest in the materiality of music, and wants her music to cause bodily experiences, certain compositional methods and musical expressions need to exist.

As was shown in the three analyses, expressions of physicality in music are never exemplified in concrete harmonic reductions, pitch class combinations or any formalised concepts of musical analysis. Rather, these expressions are found in discussions of how compositional process and ideological reasoning of the composer have affected the sounding music, and how it appears as if this can be perceived in the listener. If following a posthumanist aesthetics, the sounding music corresponds to the compositional idea, process and execution, and the experience of the music will thus follow. As explained in the analyses, the compositional processes and methods as practiced by Samuelsson in several ways engage the listener in a bodily musical experience – an experience that might not be possible to verbally articulate, but which can be in compliance with the composer’s realisation of intentions. Essentially, it can be declared as a kind of bodily musical understanding, which happens through the particular emphases Samuelsson puts on the instruments’ sonic possibilities and the physical actions needed to actualise those sounds. Again, in contrast to modernism’s compositional processes, there is a discernable difference in how the listener might experience those sonic realisations.

6. 3. Further Research

There are some aspects that have not been considered in this thesis, mostly because of the time and space limit of this project, but which can still be opened for further discussions. For example, what happens when this posthumanist aesthetic theory is applied on variation of contemporary examples with very different kinds of musical expressions? Or what about when older music, and not only on contemporary examples, is studied? What happens with the relationship between the (dead) composer, performer and listener? As in most cases even for contemporary music, at least when it comes to listening in private settings and not concert performances, the listener is always separated from the composer and performer, whether they are dead or alive. However, as this thesis has suggested, the relationship between the different agents of music making has nothing to do with direct physical contact between them, but the connection they make is centred in the music. However, one question deriving from this is: does the theory used always have to be contemporary to the musical examples, and what
happens in a study when that is not the case? One other interesting aspect that could be developed from this problem is that of historical writings on the body and its relationship to music. A historical research on music and the body, exploring several philosophical writings from a wider period range, for example looking closer into Husserl, Heidegger, Merleau-Ponty etc., could bring an enlightening understanding of those eras’ views on the body and what effects they have had on musical ideologies, ontologies and philosophies. To research further is especially the acousmatic musical experience and if/how bodily expressions in music are possible without any visual information or other knowledge of sound sources added.

At last, as a contemporary historical study, this thesis can be said to reflect an awakened issue of the mind-body problem and its relation to bodies and gender in the twentieth and twenty-first century, and of course it could be very much possible to extend this study into a broader historical context using theories and musical examples coeval to the periods studied. This is to say that music can tell us many things about historical or contemporary societies and cultural ideologies, as well as how societies and theories can assist in understanding the ontology of music. Finally, it can be argued that the ontology of music changes as the world and our understanding of it change, and music can sometimes be the answer for our questions when such changes seem incomprehensible – obviously a topic worth further exploration.
7. Appendix

Example 1 – Lufttrumma III, bars 47-66
Example 2 – Ö, bars 54-78 (see particularly bars 58-63)
Example 3 – Ö, bars 126-142

126

spiccato

131

spiccato

136

pizz.

141

pizz.

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56
Example 4 – Fantasia i cirkel, bars 47-62

E misterioso, leggero
accelerando, air sound only, colours of pitch changes (wait for piano tone)

move e-bow to F# (lilla oktaven), on the middle string of three strings

let ring in pedal until bar 76
Fl.
connect to Pi.
52
ord.
whistle tone
p

Vln.
harmonics approx. rhythm (free)
sul A
ppp

Vc.
connect to Pi.
sul tasto

Pno.
touch string gently
with top of metal stick

Fl.
whistle tone

Vln.
harmonics approx. rhythm (free)
sul A

Vc.

Pno.
touch string gently
with top of rubber ball

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8. Bibliography

8. 1. Books and Articles


8. 2. Websites/Web Pages


8. 3. Recordings

------------------- (2014) *Solgudinnan*, Myran Prod, MYPR 01, BIEM.

8. 4. Scores
