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## **SYMPOSIUM 10: What is the Role of Philosophy in Music Psychology?**

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### **Symposium: What is the role of Philosophy in Music Psychology?**

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Proc. Page: 169-169

#### **1. Background**

Recent moves to place sociological perspectives at the heart of the psychological endeavour in the domain of music (Hargreaves & North, 1997; Sloboda, 2001) have been regarded as evidence of the growing health of the discipline of music psychology. The development of 'specialised tributaries' from the mainstream that draw on a range of disciplines are viewed as contributing to this healthy state. In the call for papers for this conference an identified theme is that of 'Philosophy's contribution to music psychology' suggesting important links between these two areas and a further strengthening of the discipline of psychology. In 1983 Bruner wrote that he was 'finally convinced that a psychology of mind can never be free of a philosophy of mind' (1983, 129), implying that any psychology of mind involves a philosophy of mind whether this is explicit or implicit, acknowledged, and/or interrogated. He added 'it is not that a philosophy of mind will guide us to our data or the design of our experiments. Rather, I think, it will guard us against the triviality into which we are likely to stumble when we narrow our focus to do this study, that experiment, or offer this theory' (1983, 130). Working from Bruner's conviction it could be speculated that any psychology of music can never be free of a philosophy of music, that such a philosophy should guard us against triviality, and guide us in the generation of data and the design of experiments.

#### **2. Aims**

Contributions to this Symposium shall interrogate this notion further with a particular emphasis on examination of the roles and contribution of philosophy to the discipline of music psychology, and the ways in which advances in music psychology hold implications for the on-going development of music philosophy. The discussant will be from fields outside direct study in music psychology and music perception.

#### **3. Proposed Structure**

A two hour session. 3 × 15-25 minute papers (a couple of quick clarifier questions at the end of each paper, if necessary, but papers will be presented directly in sequence) followed by 5 to 10 minutes of commentary by discussant, 10-15 minute 'debate' between contributors (led by discussants) and 10-15 minutes of general questions and comments. Wrap up by discussant (2 minutes).

### **Naturalizing Aesthetics**

*Iain Giblin; University of New South Wales, Australia*

Time: Sat 20 11.00 am, Stream: C Proc. Page: 170-172  
Venue: Room 327, Webster Level 3

This paper argues that although recent developments in the philosophy of mind have greatly enhanced our knowledge of mental phenomena there is still scepticism about the psychological reality of musical cognition and the relevance science has for musical understanding.

If we endeavour to study music there is no particular reason why it cannot be studied in the way we study other psychological phenomena. It is assumed that music is a product of the human mind and, therefore, we may proceed to study it in a naturalistic manner.

### **Popper's Black Swan: Philosophical Possibilities for a Developmental Psychology of Music**

*Margaret Barrett; University of Tasmania, Australia*

Time: Sat 20 11.30 am, Stream: C Proc. Page: 173-173  
Venue: Room 327, Webster Level 3

Psychology and philosophy are semantic activities through which we seek to discover and communicate a version of our worlds. Whilst each of these fields may be seen as dealing with separate versions of the world, psychological theories are inevitably embedded in a particular philosophical view of the world. Conversely every philosophy holds within its tenets a range of psychological implications. This leads me to ask what are the underlying philosophical tenets of a 'developmental psychology of music'?

Whilst developmental psychology has encompassed theories that employ the notions of: stages (Piaget); information processing (Case, Sternberg); contextualisation (Vygotsky); and domain theories (Gardner), the developmental psychology of music has been more fragmented, and less concerned with comprehensive views of the musical life of the developing child. This may be partially attributed to the nature of research in the field which has tended to focus on isolated aspects of music behaviour in which the child is viewed as a musical naïf or 'proto-adult' in the nature and extent of her musical understanding and participation. The novice-expert account of musical development that lies at the heart of many research endeavors in the developmental psychology of music is founded on a teleological view of human development. In this view it is assumed that the endpoint of musical development is the demonstration of expertise in specific practices of the adult world. Recent research investigating children's musical practices in self-initiated communities of musical practice challenges this view of development and expertise, providing what may be termed as 'falsification' in a Popperian sense (the single observation of a black swan conclusively proves the statement 'all swans are white' to be false).

In this paper I shall examine the philosophical implications of a novice-expert account of musical development and explore the philosophical possibilities of alternative accounts of musical development.

### **The Poet and the Peasant: the Isolation of Music Psychology**

*Robert Walker; University of New South Wales, Australia*

Time: Sat 20 12.00 pm, Stream: C Proc. Page: 174-176  
Venue: Room 327, Webster Level 3

Modern psychology emerged from the Renaissance re-interpretation of the texts of Plato, Aristotle and other thinkers from ancient Greece. The system of investigation into human responses to music, the psychology of music, has hardly divested itself of old ontological laws of cause and effect. The argument is that meaning in music is a result of the poetry of human societies, specifically the western modern societies stemming from Italy a few hundred years ago. The ideas that made music in western culture were transmitted from generation to generation in a process similar to that of the transmission of genes across generations. The argument for a cultural equivalent to the gene is put forward by Richard Dawkins in his concept of the meme and by Lujigi Cavalli-Sforza in his mathematical arguments about how idea, like genes, are transmuted across individuals and generations. The poetry of meaning is really the poetry of culture.