

## 312.2.0.MALT - Assignment 3

The role which gesture plays in contemporary thought about meaning formation, in musical contexts.

### 312.2.0.MALT -"If I could say it, I wouldn't have to dance it"

A Philosophical Investigation of Multi-Modality  
Bifrost University - May 25th 2010 - Assignment 3 -

In this short essay I will discuss the role which gesture can play in contemporary thought about meaning formation in musical contexts. I will state that the magic behind a brilliant musical performance rest in the words, "magic behind" and is somewhat unfathomable. Additionally I emphasize that conscious gesture is not essential thing for a good performance but rather a tool for the musician to connect with the music eventually leading to a better recital.

Somehow I find it difficult to discuss this topic, gesture and music. Maybe it is because when it comes to art, generally I have been a spokesman for unlimited an unrestricted experience. For example, let's talk a little bit about movies; one of the things that I find bothersome is when the promotion effort for a movie is so immense and detailed that you already know almost every tiny bit of the story, in and behind the movie. Everybody is talking about it and when you finally go to the cinema or see it on DVD, the expectations are so high that the result is often total disappointment.

In addition I could mention the countless movies I have seen, based on famous books and the experience did nothing more than giving me the confirmation how much better the book was, or at least how hopeless it seems to translate a story from a book into a movie. Furthermore I often think about the good old days of radio that I was so fortunate to experience. I have memories of me, eight or nine years old, listening to radio drama, famous thrillers like Gaslight or something of that sort. Since then I have had the opinion that books and the radio are in some sense better and more effective than movies and television. The vision and the pictures that you make in your mind are with out any limits and when hearing and seeing nothing but the words or and sounds, either from reading or listening you are not obliged to take notice of any restrictions set by the pictures already laid out for you.

The assignment was to write about gesture and music but this experience I have described regarding books and films has put its mark on my thought on any

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restrictions or introduction when it comes to art and performance. On the other hand, gesture is obviously not about setting restriction but rather making some underlining in the performance. In my opinion, it can probably be different from person to person how they behave generally and how they find appropriate to present them self when performing. What I find important is, it has to be looked at from the artist's point of view, it should be the musician decision how he or she present the music.

I would like to stress further the notion, that it differs from person to person or performer to performer how each present him or her self. It's been called charisma, stage presence etc. etc. Having the right amount of stage charisma can make the whole difference for the performing artist, if making or breaking. I have heard interesting description that elucidate this in a sense and is one of my favorite quotes, "To be immensely good at something but somewhat dreadful and boring", what a fantastic way of putting things, picture the brilliant musician playing the most complicated piece of music with total technical integrity but without any charm or inspiration. Some of us can tell a story of some musical performance were the artist was clearly of the better kind playing brilliantly but didn't translate the music to the audience in the way anticipated or at least without the bringing out the feelings, one would have expected. lost

One can only speculate but the way the artist present what is played makes the whole difference. But then again, is this not just a question of taste and the mood of each one in the audience? Let me emphasize, this is all just speculations, in my opinion it is quite clear that the perception of the audience is about many other things than the music it self. Finally, the body languages we as an audience take in when attending a performance are often hardly visible. In my opinion it's this subtle gesture that's part of the indescribable charm that make a musician an outstanding performer. The way the musician knowingly put effort in the gesture he or she consign in the presentation, is rather a question of personal decision to expand their ability to connect with the music they're playing, and improve their performance.