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MUSIC, THEOLOGY, AND SPACE: LISTENING AS A WAY OF SEEKING GOD

ABSTRACT

Music, it will be claimed, intones the meaning of being human. In the Christian tradition, music is central to liturgy and worship. From its roots in the New Testament, through its approval or prohibition by the Church Fathers, to the Puritan purges, the Classical liturgical commissions, and the revivalist celebrations, sacred music continues to be a means of negotiating the relationship between human selves and the sacred. The theological importance of music has been examined most recently with respect to time, but the theological promise of the spatial dimension of music either has been ignored or rejected. Accompanied by the Augustine of the *Confessions*, this article asks whether "the space of music" offers a way of seeking to know who one is and who God is.

1. INTRODUCTION

Music is a foundational grammar of being human.[1] More so than language and more so than art, music sounds being. In contrast to these two forms of articulating or representing even the barest lineaments of the dusty essence of one's human fragility, the incisive tonal abrasions of music seem to "speak" and "depict" one's human condition with more expressive definitude.

1 If this is a bold claim, it is somewhat less bold than in the long tradition from the harmonious numerical ratios of "the music of the spheres" of Pythagoras and his *epigonoi* (Reilly 2001) to Steiner's (2001) assertion of music as "a grammar of creation".

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Needless to say, this is a bold claim. One is asserting that, more directly than representative art and more exactly than poetry, music "sounds" the very self that one is, both knowingly and unknowingly. Music, it is being claimed, articulates the veracity of the self in an unmediated mode, probing in its inquiry and promising in its melodic truth.

If such a candid declaration of intent, at least, may be entertained, then why, one must ask, does listening to pitched and rhythmic sound sequences concealingly reveal the inwardness of being human? How is it that music may constitute a veritable orthology of the self? Where is it – whether in plainsong or polyphony, melodious exploration or harmonious expansion, attenuated modal forms or fugal complexities – that the power of music to inquire of and to "sing" the self resides? Why, in one sense, does music seem "to wound" in its meanings; and its "injuries" leave tonal scars of torment long after the sounds recede? If, in this contestable exploration, music intones meaning,[2] then not only do the sounds unfold, and in their unfolding recede, but this notation of human meaning also fails within the grammar of music itself. This is a paradox of music: it may seem to sound the modal self with a searing rigour, but it does so in an idiom that defies translation and, as a consequence, presents only the essential, and yet almost impenetrable, clues to the known unknownness of being human.

Where, then, at its most acute, does this tonal articulation of the human self reside? And how does music perform this sounded definition, in the sense that it may penetrate the self so knowingly in the time and in the space of one's life? And, significantly, what, ultimately, has pitched sound – temporally unfolding and spatially expansive – to do with theology?

2. THE SPACE OF MUSIC'S CADENCE

The psychiatrist, Anthony Storr[3] (1972:291-292), stated that

> We all possess inner worlds which are, to varying degree, at odds with the external world; and the contents of these inner worlds and the tensions engendered by them have much in common. The great creators, because their tensions are of universal rather than

2 Warren (2014:13-22) explores "five models of musical meaning", and, although the exploration, in this instance, may focus on the subjective and interpretive modes, it also coheres with Warren's (2014:21-22) preference for "inter-relational musical meaning".

3 Anthony Storr, for whom music increasingly provided solace in times of trial, was the son of a sub-dean of Westminster Abbey. As a boy, he was permitted to sit in the organ loft during the liturgy.

> personal import, can appeal to all of us when they find, in their work, a new path of reconciliation ... [This] pattern of tension followed by resolution is perhaps best discerned in music ... [and these] patterns of music seem more exclusively related to the inner world of man [sic] than do those of the other arts.

But where, or how, is this "inner world" intoned? One wishes to exert some pressure upon this question, by contending that it is music's "*path* of reconciliation", music's *promise* of rest and the earnest perceptible in music's *cadence*, in its *fall* towards an ending, that the "inner" reaches of being human are sounded. Here resides both the tonal articulation of loss, and the resounding of human aspiration, or, more hesitantly, of the mere intimations of human hope. It may be that, in this hope of resolution, in this desire to still a conflictual being – in the hauntings of pitched sounds which haunt one – theological inquiry may probe the spatial depth and height of the human self, by pursuing the meanings in music toward, possibly, some deeply felt "intimations of immortality".

This "*path*", this movement *towards* rest, evokes Augustine's (AD 354-430) opening to the *Confessions* (1919:i): *quia fecisti nos ad te et inquietum est cor nostrum donec requiescat in te*, when attention is placed upon the "*ad te*". Indeed, "our heart is restless until it rests in you". But why? It is "*quia fecisti nos ad te*" – it is "because you have made us *ad te*" – "towards yourself" – that is, beings who "fall towards God", and which, to invoke a musical term, comprises the cadential space of falling towards resolution. It is this compositional phrasing of falling and converging musical tones *towards* an ending that may provide a site for the theological exploration of seeking God for, as Wells (2002:216) observed, "[m]uch of the power of music lies in the irresolution, in the cry for a final answer".

For humanity, it may be asserted, is tragically entrapped in the time and space of human living. If Christian theology endeavours to provide a final and definitive answer to this entrapment, then perhaps music sounds the tragedy of the search for an answer with a tonal veracity that notates and sounds a humanity trapped in time and space knowingly incomplete, knowingly "beings towards death" (Heidegger [1962] 2008:§234ff.), in the quest for completion and in the desire of resolution. If this is so, then the power of music may reside in its ability to articulate this fractured self, this human frangible self, in the desperate yearning for, but not the acquisition of wholeness. Music, it may be suggested, performs this task most penetratingly when the notes fall towards – when the notes occupy the space of falling – and intone the cadential sequence, but do not reach their consummate resolution. In these closing moments, one is reminded of the partial and deficient human self that one is. In this temporal unfolding

of note succeeding note, in this spatial exploration of tone echoing tone, so, in condensed narrative form, the story of being human is told as the inexorable progression from creative inception towards a final end.[4]

This descent provides the time and the space in which theology is undertaken: in the questioning conflicts of one's self, as it seeks to know what cannot be known either of oneself or of one's world, or even of one's reason for being, in any ultimate sense. Music, in these cadential and declining pitches of a reaching hope, assesses and evaluates, with, one claims, a devastating and penetrating exactness, the very condition of being human. Music, more specifically in its concluding phrases, appears able to fathom and intone "the secrets of our hearts", to evoke Purcell's funeral anthem of deep restraint. Similarly, in the hearing of these terminal sequences, perhaps one is presented with the barest of "traces of transcendence", to advert to Küng's (1992) book on Mozart.

Although inventive metaphors in language and innovative perspectives in art rightly resist metaphrase, nevertheless, they succumb, with less modesty than music, to paraphrase, to explanation, and to description, as well as to various comparative modes of appraisal to which music remains implacably resistant. Therefore, may one conjecture – and no doubt too boldly – that, to a greater degree, music may constitute the primary grammar of the informing grammars of music, language, and mathematics of being human?

If, for a moment, one may consider such a notion, and if, in addition, one may consider that being human constitutes being human in terms of Christian theology, then Begbie (2000; 2007; 2013) has carefully and persistently examined the instructive weight that the *temporal* exploration of music possesses for theology. Some aspects of Begbie's seminal work, *Theology, music and time* (2000), will be noted below, but here one is seeking primarily to inaugurate a nascent response to his repeated assertion of the temporal rather than the spatial import of music for theology, and rather to inquire of music's *spatial* dimension and its theological promise. In order to

4 The challenge that one is returning to the Romantic conception of music, so that music constitutes no more than "an unknown realm ... [of] ... inexpressible longing ... [and] haunted yearning", to appropriate words from Hoffmann's almost singularly decisive and peremptory comment about music's power (cited in Begbie 2013:107, 116), is not without import. Indeed, one is affirming that music sounds human incompletion and imperfection and that, as a consequence, one does quest, and "yearn" for a fulfilment and perfection that one realises one lacks; but no, this longing is not merely an emotional and unreflective state. Rather, it is being proposed that music informs and notates the searcher in the search for completion.

do so, the Augustine of the *Confessions* will be one's guide on the journey to probe – and, indeed, to hear and to listen to – the spatial self.

Therefore, one is asking: What does the spatial exploration of the sense of hearing offer to the listener about the self? When music, as spatio-temporal ordered sounds, is experienced, what are the possibilities of the knowledge of being human that emerge? In addition, precisely because it is being suggested that music is a foundational grammar of being human in a theological exploration: What resource does pitched notation provide as a way of knowing what it means to be human and, in particular, to be a knowing human self in relation to God? If Begbie (2000; 2007; 2013) has provided answers to these questions more insistently with regard to time, then the cause, in this instance, is merely to speculate, with probationary caution, as to whether spatial depth and height in music may provide some clues as to how human identity may be negotiated in relation to the divine.

3. WHAT IS MUSIC?

But what is music that, one claims, is so foundational to being human? Music, at least in the sense in which it impacts upon the human self experientially, is sound. But it is not merely noise, and, therefore, it is not any and all sound. Rather, it is intentional sound, in other words, sound that is purposefully ordered (Higgins 2012:19-23) and that employs the qualities of tonal pitch and/or rhythmic patterning. Furthermore, and somewhat ironically, these qualities of purposefully ordered sound must be augmented by the absence of sound. For sound that is music comprises tonal pitch and its absence, because music is composed both of pitched notation of various lengths, and of pause notation of various lengths. In contrast to Kania (2011:11-12), neither tonal distinction nor the ordering of tones, of necessity, establish a recognisable regularity of rhythmic patterning. Disjunctive and irregular tonal order – where order merely is the sequential temporal arrangement and vertical spatial distribution of pitched sounds – make rhythm a decidedly subjective quality. Rather, music may, for the purposes of this article – and without entertaining theories of its origin (Storr 1992), or the problematics of its meaning (Brandt 2008) and definition further – be viewed as pitched sound and its silence, which is notated temporally and spatially.

3.1 Music and time

Recently, Begbie's (2000; 2007; 2013) theological exploration of the temporal unfolding of musical sound has engendered the rudiments of a resistant countermelody of spatial depth and height (Dyrness 2011). Undoubtedly,

time, or metre, in music, establishes the structure of pitched sound, and pitched-sounds-in-time – that is, ordered musical phrases – engender the contingent prospect of melodic meaning. But what is time? How does time structure musical sound? How do time-ordered tones and, in particular, the cadential dying of tonal mood assist theological inquiry and reflect, even interrogate, the rumour of the divine which they may sound?

Time flows; it is directional – from the past into the future. Time cannot be arrested; it cannot be stopped. In it one lives, and moves, and has one's being. But this is to describe the quotidian experience of time and not to define it, as Augustine (*Confessions* XI. xiv) asked: *Quid est ergo tempus? Si nemo ex me quaerat, scio; si quaerenti explicare velim, nescio*. Although one may wish *to conceptualize* time as a regularized and uniform measurement, one actually *experiences* time as inconstant, diverse, and almost wilful.

In Julian Barnes' (2011:3) novel, which, for one's own purpose, fortuitously is entitled *The sense of an ending*, the narrator Anthony Webster observes:

> We live in time – it holds us and moulds us – but I've never felt I understood it very well. And I'm not referring to theories about how it bends and doubles back, or may exist elsewhere in parallel versions. No, I mean ordinary, everyday time, which clocks and watches assure us passes regularly: tick-tock, click-clock. Is there anything more plausible than a second hand? And yet it takes only the smallest pleasure or pain to teach us time's malleability. Some emotions speed it up, others slow it down; occasionally, it seems to go missing – until the eventual point when it really does go missing, never to return.

Time, in one's *experience* thereof, does not conform to an established and quantifiable standard of measurement. Rather, it consists of restless sequences and of periods of diverse duration. If these heterogeneous and various encounters with the multifariousness of time "sense" their own *future* "endings", then, somewhat paradoxically, they become known to one as historical *pasts* recorded in one's memory, the faculty that both shapes and informs who one is. For one lives into the future; but who one is, one's selfhood, is constructed analeptically, by returning to memory, and by constructing a narrative self from one's own tendentious remembrances. This self is both incomplete and fractured, because, while it is living into the future, simultaneously it constitutes itself with a selective amnesia, both with respect to what is filed away in one's memory and with respect to what is, and to what may be, retrieved into one's present narrative. Thus, one places one's present life in time into one's memory and one constructs

a self – a present self – who is living into a future, but it is a self who is founded upon a partial record of an already discriminating past, which invokes Augustine's question: *Quis ego et qualis ego?* (*Confessions* IX. i) – "Who am I and what am I?"

One's narrative self always is corrigible, profoundly contestable, and, possibly, deeply flawed, and a narrative self-in-time experiences change, deficiency, and impairment in the awareness of an accomplished and perfect *telos*. If such a temporal awareness of lack is confronted by, what one may call, a spatial awareness of completion, then does music, which one has claimed may constitute a grammar of being human, provide both a more profound, perhaps more truthful, tonal echo of the frangible self, and a lesson in the endeavour to acquire a greater redemptive self-authenticity? For if the cadential space, which closes a music composition, intones both temporal flow towards an ending and the perceived resolution of harmonic finality, then how may time and space in music sound the human self?

First, music itself is highly provisional.[5] Pitched sounds must succeed one another in time, in order to constitute any sense of melodic continuity. As they pass one's hearing of them, so they fade and then die into the past, but the one who is listening to them holds those pasts present to and in the sounds that follow them. In this way, to transpose the grammar, the listener creates a form of "narrative" continuity. Thus, in the words of the Austro-American musicologist Victor Zuckerkandl (1896-1965) (in Begbie 2000:85), music contests "the dogma that order is possible only in the enduring, the immutably fixed, the substantial". Rather, music marshals and regulates the insubstantial *provisionality* of sounds. In this sense, music, in fact, may be instructive of the endeavour to create a progressively less prescriptive and more selfless self, which, while it continues to order its narrative, nevertheless becomes increasingly suspicious of any and every definitive claim to possess an authoritative and singular autobiography. For it is upon the claim to possess a self-assured, stable and definitive "I", an "I" with sure and certain dogmatic views and opinions, that the will to dominate and to control and, as a consequence, to subject and ultimately to oppress others arises. By contrast, music teaches that the arrangement of the self is always open and available, at least, to modulations and innovative transpositions.

Secondly, music, in that ordering of sound, also plays with time. In Western Classical compositions, although time is often predictively structured, time signatures may differ not only between movements, but

5 These four points about time and music are examined in various ways throughout Begbie's (2000), work, but, in this instance, they are explored and elaborated upon with regard to self-seeking as a way of self knowing.

also between bars. Fluctuations in metre can display anxiety and solicitude in contrast to constancy and restfulness, so that various qualities from the spectrum of human emotions may be patterned aurally. Listening to those embedded moods may do more than reflect a modal form of listening to oneself. For when the transition is made from the agonizing strings in the minor key to the chordal harmonics in the major key, the challenge is issued to interrogate one's subjective emotional moods and passions, and to view them as a constituent part, rather than the final arbiter, of the self.

Thirdly, music demands the sequential flow of time. A form of patience is required both in the making of, and in the listening to music, which not only turns to the sounds that one is hearing, but also turns reflectively to the self who hears, which cautions that, in a profound manner, life demands "waiting". Just as conclusions about the tonal direction of a melody, at which one arrives too hastily, disregard both compositional innovation and freedom, so too definitive pronouncements about who one is and what one believes deny an inescapable human reality: that one dwells in the cadential space of one's falling, in search of resolution. Music teaches one the lesson, which the great Christian mystics have repeatedly taught about contemplation and about life itself: that the patient endurance of waiting upon God is one's task.

Fourthly, music ends. The resounding final chord dies away and silence replaces sound. But that may well be true only in an ultimate sense. In the meantime – in the time of one's living, which is the time of one's listening – one suggests that every final cadence resounds and echoes with the noise of its precursors. Furthermore, it may be that, in the earnest of a cadential search for consonance in the final notes, one simultaneously hears tonal futures of promise, so that any and every cadential rest is momentary on this side of eternity, as from a fleeting repose, the lifetime's endeavour of becoming authentically human must, once again, actively be pursued. Thus, the sounds end, and, in their ending, begin.

3.2 Music and space

This exploration of music as the temporal notation of being human emphasizes melodic flow, while acknowledging its multivaried possibilities. But it also exerts pressure on the dimension of harmonic depth. Indeed, music is heard in a temporal mode and in an aural space. But one is proposing that that space is more than physical or architectural space. Zuckerkandl (cited by Begbie 2013:141; original emphasis) adverts to the tones of three notes of a triad sounding in space "*through one another* ... they interpenetrate one another", which, in this instance, one appropriates

as an image of the spatial aspect of sound on the path of self-seeking, in order to reach after a form of self-knowing.

Barnes' earlier reflection on time's ending may have been induced by the death of his South African born wife of some thirty years, the literary agent, Pat Kavanaugh, who was dead within thirty-seven days of receiving a diagnosis of cancer. In a short, possibly unequalled, lament, entitled "The loss of depth", Barnes (2013:82) tells of a moral seriousness, a truthfulness, a stability, and a *depth*, which she lent to his life, and all of which now departs:

> The chief witness to what has been your life is now silenced (98) ... [a]nd everything you do, or might achieve thereafter, is thinner, weaker, matters less. There is no echo coming back; no texture, no resonance, no *depth* of field (100) ... Grief reconfigures time, its length, its texture, its function ... It also reconfigures space (84).

Barnes' life, like any other, whether in the wake of grief or not, continues in time's inexorable unfolding, but it is precisely the spatial qualities of being human – those dimensions of inwardness and of transcendence – that abandon him. It may be unsurprising that, as a lexicographer, his recovery of a quality of textural density to his life occurs through words, words accompanied by music. In opera, and in the love duets, in particular, Barnes discovers the return of a depth of texture to being human, which lends a dimensional distinctiveness to a former flat and singular vapidity. In trespassing upon these moments of private passion on the stage, the auditor listens not only to music's consecutive pitches, to the yielding of sound in a *temporal* dimension, but also to music's timbre in the *spatial* dimension.

The density of harmonic resonance is evident in this *space* of music;[6] and it is in the spatial inflections of sound that the emotional colouring of a work is found. More significantly, it is the place where the endeavour to reproduce the polyphonic complexity of the vertical – depth and height – rather than the horizontal – linear and temporal – dimension occurs. Any examination of a musical score engenders a spectrum of possible interpretations, which, in various ways, may endeavour to represent aurally the inflectional qualities of a work. In this respect, it may be suggested that to listen exclusively on the horizontal plane of linear tonal progression and movement is to limit the aural promise of a work. By contrast, to listen on the vertical axis of the explorative dynamics of harmonic depth and height

6 In his exploration of "the space of music", Scruton (2014:147) notes that "musical space defies our ordinary understanding of movement: for example, octave equivalence means that a theme can return to its starting point even though moving constantly upward".

in music, one may encounter with greater seriousness an aural simulation of the human condition of the fragmented and innate deficiency and lack of perfection of being human – the perfection that is recognised in the tones already present as an anticipatory prolepsis of the impending, final, and perfect cadence.

The endeavour to explore the spatial depth and height of music's notation of the self emerges as a result of Begbie's (2000; 2007; 2013) influential arguments that bind music to a notation of consonance between the temporal aspect of human experience and the motion that results from the inceptive creative act of God, who, in inaugurating a world and its beings, places it and them in time. But this close and almost singular relationship between music and time causes one some disquiet. Indeed, somewhat paradoxically, it may also generate an anxiety in the cause of one who affirms Christian belief, and who, perhaps predictably, may conceive of the Christian life as a journey towards – or, to press the claim – a journey into God. If time's control of music and music's covenant with time enable music to improvise and syncopate temporal rhythmic patterns by truncating and distending, altering and juxtaposing, the temporal signatures of music, then does it do so, *au fond*, by exclusively resounding the time-bound nature of being creaturely? If, for Begbie (2000:241),

> it is unwise to assume that music's temporal freedom is best characterised primarily in terms of its difference from and independence of "our" day-to-day times ... [and that] ... we would do better to understand it as arising from an intensive and respectful engagement with the temporalities integral to the world,

then the validity of such a statement does not appear to lead to a summary rejection of other significant dimensions of music. Even in jazz, to advert to Begbie (2000:233), time may be arrested by syncopated rhythm; but, more significantly, it would seem a partial betrayal of the intent of much sacred music to deny that it explores and negotiates the meaning of the human-divine, temporal-transcendent, spatial relationship to the divine.

For something more is being claimed than that music "emerges" as a representation of the temporal nature of being human in a different register than, for instance, language. The seemingly exclusive assertion that music's contribution to theology, and its ability to clarify the relationship between human beings and God, is undertaken in and through its contract with time is, one proposes, to reject the textural depth of the construals of identity – and the soundings of this identity – that structure the self. Although music is composed as temporally progressive sounds, it is also bound to an aural range, a range that is evident in the manner in which a composer may probe innovatively the creative freedom of music's compositional promise

in the overtones, or the triadic chordal dimension of sound, so that a work may not only explore music's time, but also, and not insignificantly, probe the depth and height of music's space.

With Steiner (1989:63; added emphasis), one is asking an inevitable and perennial question, and if it is a question that is unanswerable, then it is also an inescapable question, which presses upon the meaning of being human: "Without the truths of music, what would be our *deficit of spirit* at the close of day?" In appropriating the content of this foundational inquest, one wishes to suggest that it is without not merely music's time, but, probably more crucially, music's space that the deficit is too costly an erosion of what it is that constitutes our humanity, because it is to reject what one is proposing ought to be considered as a foundational grammar of being human. And the experience of being human in time is also, and, perhaps, centrally, an experience of being human in space – in complex and textured height and depth – and that, consequently, the proposal ought, at least, to be entertained that if music's time has theological import, then the spatial aspect of music, decidedly, similarly may contain theological promise.

4. THE SEARCH FOR "WHO AND WHAT ONE IS"

Augustine's *Confessions* tell of a journey of seeking, in order to find.[7] As a narrative account, it is a search for God; as a narrative search for God, it is a narrative of the one who searches for God. Implicit in the search for God is Augustine's own search for himself. As Turner (1995:55) states:

> Augustine came to see that these two pursuits, the search for God and the search for himself, were in fact the same search; that to find God was possible only in and through the discovery of the self and that the self, his self, was discoverable only there where God was to be found. And that place, where both he, Augustine, and God were to be found was in the depths of his own interiority: *tu autem eras interior intimo meo*, "But you were more inward than my own inwardness".

7 Augustine's reflections upon music in his early text, *De Musica*, appropriate a Pythagorean and mathematical conception of musical sound. Although his statements on music in the *Confessions* (X. xxxiii) are hesitant, they are not without the approval thereof: *magnam instituti huius utilitatem rursus agnosco. Ita fluctuo inter periculum voluptatis et experimentum salubritatis magisque, adducor; non quidem inretractabilem sententiam proferens, cantandi consuetudinem approbare in ecclesia, ut per oblectamenta aurium infirmior animus in affectum pietatis adsurgat*.

If the Augustine of the *Cassiciacum Dialogues* (Cary 2000:147; Dobell 2009:20; Turner 1995:58) would have found such a statement coherent within a Neo-Platonic anthropology, because it would allow for some sense of an eternal continuity between himself – or between his eternal pre-existing soul – and God, then the Christian Augustine is confronted by an irresolvable paradox when endeavouring to seek himself and God. Although

> Augustine had previously sought a complete escape from the body through the Platonic ascents ... now he realizes that such efforts are ultimately futile,

which constitutes a decisive turn in his thought that occurs between 394-396 CE (Dobell 2009: 211). In the arguments and disputes from the Council of Nicaea in 325 CE to the Council of Constantinople in 381 CE, any form of perennial continuity between the eternal and the temporal realms is rejected. Orthodoxy now decisively affirmed that the

> Creator/creature distinction is logically exhaustive: everything in existence is either Creator or creature, there is nothing in existence that is not one or the other (Cary 2000:59),

and, as a consequence, the human soul was designated creaturely (Cary 2000:112). The Fourth Ecumenical Council at Chalcedon in 451 CE[8] affirmed the status of Jesus as ὁμοούσιον τῷ Πατρὶ κατὰ θεότητα, καὶ ὁμοούσιον τὸν αὐτον ἡμῖν κατὰ τὴν ἀνθρωπότητα. Even though this being – both fully human and fully divine – τέλειον τὸν αὐτὸν ἐν θεότητι, τέλειον τὸν αὐτὸν ἐν ἀνθρωπότητι – constitutes the uniquely Christian form of mediation between God and the creation, the claim of the two natures of Christ did not and does not, of course, extend to include humanity.[9] A creature in historical time and a being in perpetual eternity remain essentially distinctive. The probing of space in the time of being human could provide the promise of self-knowing in a manner in which time does not. For it is the verticality of depth and height, rather than the horizontality of linear progression, that may more effectively facilitate the quest to know God, which, as for Augustine, is also a quest to know the self. If space facilitates this, and if music

8 The quotations are available at: http://www.earlychurchtexts.com/main/chalcedon/chalcedonian_definition.shtml [2015, 31 August]. For an English translation, see Grillmeier (1975:544).

9 Augustine's presence at Chalcedon, some twenty-one years after his death, is palpable, as Dobell (2009:75-76; and 76, note 1) observes: "The later Augustine was an important influence upon the Chalcedonian formulation, which is clearly anticipated in such statements as the following: 'the same God who is man, and the same man who is God, not by a confusion of nature but by a unity of person'".

is a foundational grammar of being human, then music must, in some way or another, accompany the spatial inquiry of seeking to answer Augustine's question: *Quis ego et qualis ego?* (*Confessions* IX. i) – "Who am I and what am I?"

But would this mean turning away from the world and the tasks of being actively human? Would this involve exalting the life of self-inquiry, with its meditational and contemplative associations, above the ethical life of engaged action? Ethical activity is, as O'Donovan (2014:48-49) recently observed, "[t]o realize ourselves as knowing and loving agents". But it also

> requires the organization and critique of our knowledge and love ... It might seem that we could *be* ourselves, *affirm* ourselves, even *offer* ourselves, but that we could hardly *know* ourselves. My self is what I cannot get a purchase on.

This recalls Augustine's frustration: *factus eram ipse mihi magna quaestio* (*Confessions* IV. iv).[10] Augustine's statement reverberates in O'Donovan's (2014:49) quandary as an existing, affirming, and offering being, but not a self-knowing being, which induces this clamorous question: How, then, does one come to know the "I" who *exists*, who claims for itself an *identity*, and who *acts* in the world?

In this sense, implicit in the *life* of the agent who, as *agent*, is an actor in the *world*, is the ability to reflect upon an *action* that is to be undertaken. A crucial component of this reflection is evident when the deliberation is extended from focusing upon what action is to be performed and why this particular action ought to be performed, to an interrogation of the source of the one undertaking the reflection: What mode of thought has structured the possibility and so enabled one to consider this action to be right and, therefore, necessary?

This internal probe constitutes a more foundational inquiry, because it is about coming to know the one who comes to know what to do; and why it is that, not only an action needs to be done, but why and how one has reached the point of knowing that an action needs to be undertaken, and that it is *this* and not that action that needs to be performed. The establishment of this more fundamental procedure comprises an inward knowing about the knower *by* the knower, who, by knowing what action to embark upon, subsequently becomes the ethical actor who executes the action. It is a scrutiny of the "inner space" of the self, which, in Cary's (2000:126; O'Donovan 2014:49; also, 49, note 4) view, is Augustine's

10 Similarly, later Augustine (*Confessions* X. xxxiii) states that *in cuius oculis mihi quaestio factus sum, et ipse est languor meus*.

invention, an "inner space" conceived of as "memory". It is a faculty that is personal and human, and like human beings, mortal, but there is nowhere else to go but to the faculty of one's memory if one is seeking to become less of a *magna quaestio* (*Confessions* IV. iv) to one's self – that is, if one is seeking to know: *Quis ego et qualis ego?* (*Confessions* IX. i).

In lapidary terms: *Who* and *what* it is that one is seeking to find, one *is seeking* to find. That is to say that, if one is seeking the self and God, one has not yet apprehended the *who* and acquired the *what* it is that one is seeking to find or to know, but that one will know that *this* is among the who and the what one is seeking to find or to know, when one finds it. And if this is so, then the features of who, and the aspects of what, one is seeking to find may be conceived of as an endeavour to recollect what appears to be beyond one's recall. And if that which one cannot recall appears as though,

in Augustine's (*Confessions* X. xix) words, *ipsa memoria perdit aliquid*, then *ubi tandem quaerimus nisi in ipsa memoria?* On this pilgrimage to find what it is that one cannot remember about one's self, but one knows that it is something that cannot be anywhere else except in one's memory; when one is presented with a consecutive range of possible responses to that which has been forgotten, then, one after the other, they are rejected until one is able to say, *hoc est* (*Confessions* X. xix).[11] But how does one know that *hoc est*, unless one already knows what it is that one is seeking to find about one's self? All of these remembrances, when one is able to say, *haec sunt illa*, are the constitutive features of one's forgotten self, which are made present as remembered features of who one is.

Therefore, returning to one's memory, in order to seek to discover who one is and narrate the self, compels an inquiry that returns to memory in this mode of bewilderment of unknowingly knowing what it is that one is seeking to find. It comprises the task of searching for that which one cannot remember, that which seems initially, as Augustine states, as though "memory loses it" (*Confessions* X. xix), and yet which memory has not lost, because it will be there and recognisable when one finds it. This pursuit endeavours to answer the question: *Quis ego et qualis ego?* (*Confessions* IX. i), which, concomitantly for Augustine's Christian, will be conducive to knowing God. Although this is an inquiry into one's past, and into what has informed the self in the past time of one's life, it is far less about the temporal flow of linear time than about the crucial moments in time as defining events, which have constructed one's self-identity. Thus, one proposes that, rather than conceiving of this return as a discovery of the temporal unfolding of one's past self, it may be better conceived

11 *Et ibi si aliud pro alio forte offeratur, respuimus, donec illud occurrat quod quaerimus. Et cum occurrit, decimus: 'hoc est'"* (*Confessions* X. xix).

primarily in spatial terms. And if it is an inquiry into the past of one's own human time, then it discovers this past of one's temporal life in an "inner space" of one's self, to advert to Cary (2000).

5. SENSORY KNOWING IN SOUND

When this journey is a pilgrimage to portray the self, and on this inner journey one is saying, *hoc est sed non illud*, then one is accepting this – *hoc* – known aspect of one's past – which, of course, constitutes one's present – as a valid aspect of one's self, through an act of inward recognition that this – *hoc* – is a strand of the self, which makes the self the self who one is. In this articulation of one's narrative, the *hoc est* (*Confessions* X. xix) includes verbal articulation – yes to this word and not to that word – visual imagining – yes to this portrayal and not to that portrayal – and aural intonation – yes to this chord and not to that chord of one's self. These words, which are descriptive of, these images which are authentic to, and these sounds which are in the key of, the self for whom one is seeking, are intuitive and emotional forms of sensory comprehension, through which one recognises and knows the self sensorially.

The language of poetry and of drama may provide an instructive means of considering the space of the inner self as the region of sensory knowing. Tragic drama, which, as Aristotle (*Poetics* 1449b:24-28) noted, "through pity and fear" achieves "*katharsis*", denotes an emotive form of identification by the spectators with the tragic characters. Consequently, it engenders "pity" in the spectators for the characters, which causes "fear", which is a sensory awareness – a form of knowing – that the suffering on stage bears upon the human condition of the spectators, so that what ensues is "a transformation in which a tragic audience's cognitive understanding interacts with its highly charged emotional response" (Halliwell 2005:405).

If such moments of sensory and emotional cognition, which comprise "real emotions, of a complex sort", as Nussbaum (2001:278) observes, are not thought to be

> so mysterious when the experience of a tragedy is at issue ... [likewise, w]e should not think it mysterious in the case of a symphony, or a song cycle.

In a passage on music in the *Politics* (1341b), after Aristotle has referred to melodies of ethical character, those inspiring action, and those of the passions, he states the benefits of music. The passage, which includes a reference to the *Poetics*, lists them as παιδείας ἕνεκεν καὶ καθάρσεως – τί δὲ λέγομεν τὴν κάθαρσιν, νῦν μὲν ἁπλῶς, πάλιν δ' ἐν τοῖς περὶ ποιητικῆς ἐροῦμεν

σαφέστερον – τρίτον δὲ πρὸς διαγωγήν. The crucial reference to the *Poetics* or, perhaps to a lost work on poetry, possibly permits one to suggest that, just as poetic tragedy engenders sensory engagement by a self as a knowing subject, so too, for Aristotle, music is not only for "education" and "pleasure", but it is also kathartic, owing to its intoning of the self through sensory recognition by the self; this may be likened to the "pity" and "fear" experienced by the spectator of tragedy, and which is integrated intellectually into the sensorily knowing self.

It is claimed that, if words, visual scenes, and depictions strike an inward connection which speak and image the self in poetry, narrative, and drama, then so too do musical tones. Furthermore, it is being proposed that the words and the spectacle, as indeed the music of the self, which comport the *hoc est* of the inner self, are not emotional experiences *tout court*. Rather, as sensory recognitions in answer to the question, *Quis ego et qualis ego?* (*Confessions* IX. i), these emotional experiences are to be separated from passions (as orientating pursuits), sensations (as physical experiences), and moods (as psychological states) (Roberts 2007), so that, as experiences of self-recognition, the emotions encountered on this journey to answer, *Quis ego et qualis ego?* (*Confessions* IX. i), may be reconceptualised as "concerned-based construals", to employ Roberts' (2007:11) term, or "evaluative judgements", to advert to Nussbaum (2001:19-85; and *passim*).[12] In the former sense, they are meaningful within a context that connotes the person who one is; and, in the latter sense, they are judged as relevant with respect to the self who experiences them.

Thus, to say *hoc est* to this tone is both to recognise it and to judge it in some way or another as an appropriate answering note to "who and what one is". After *hearing* the sound as emotionally propriate, an evaluative process of *listening to* the sound and exploring its tonal relevance to the self may be undertaken, and this procedure, one claims, is conceived spatially rather than temporally. Evaluated as meaningful, the experienced emotions, as Nussbaum (2001:52; original emphasis) expresses it,

> contain an ineliminable reference to *me*, to the fact that it is *my* scheme of goals and projects. They are the world from my point of view.

12 Gregory (2013:215) observes that "neo-empiricist psychologists have sought to show that 'cognition is inherently perceptual, sharing systems with perception at both the cognitive and neural levels'; and that McDowell has claimed that, to make sense of the ways in which experience is evidentially relevant to rational thought, we need to accept that some of the conceptual matter of the latter is already found within the former."

And the "me" to whom they refer, is the "me" of the events of one's past, which shape both one's present and one's future, as layered textures of the height and depth of the self, spoken in words, depicted in images, and heard in sounds.

6. PROBING MUSIC'S SPACE

Therefore, it may be claimed that the activity of engaged performance resides in time and that the practice of reasoned evaluation resides in space. Actions in time – if they are to be conducive to human well-being, however that may be conceived – require not merely knowing that an action is right, but that the knower also knows why the action is right, and not merely as the result of a reasoned form of knowing, but also as the outcome of a process that includes an awareness of the epistemological constructs that generate the resultant finding that – yes, this action is the right action, because it has been arrived at by reasoning in this particular way. Such a procedure demonstrates how one knows, in order to know how to choose, so that, having chosen, one then is enabled to act rightly. Without this meta-practice of knowing how to know, in order to know how to act, one fails to know *Quis ego et qualis ego* (*Confessions* IX. i), as the *ego* who acts in time. Without meditational and contemplative depth, which also is height, the self lacks such an awareness of the self who is and acts.

As noted for Augustine, the journey to find the self is inextricably entwined in the journey to find God. The words, the images, and the sounds of the self can, in this sense, only be authentic if they also articulate, depict, and intone the being in whose image and likeness one is created. In spite of affirming the truth of his human mortality, Augustine claimed that the *image* of God is present in men and women, as the Book of Genesis (1:26) declares. The image of the Trinitarian God resides in the human faculties of the memory, the intellect, and the will. But this is a statement about *what* one is as a human being, and not about *who* one is as a person. Thus, in spite of being created in the *image* of God, one remains separate from God.[13]

13 Referring to Genesis 1:26, Augustine (1991:VII. 12) states that "man is said to be 'to the image' [of God] because of the disparity of his likeness to God, and 'to our image' to show that man is the image of the trinity; not equal to the trinity as the Son is equal to the Father but approaching it ... by a certain likeness, as one can talk of a certain proximity between things distant from each other, not proximity of place but of a sort of imitation. To this kind of approximation we are exhorted when it says, *Be refashioned in the newness of your mind*

How, then, does one progress from being created in the *image* of the Trinity to participating in the nature of God, to become "*like*" God, as Genesis puts it? For, as Marion (2012:255; original emphasis) aptly states:

> It is not a matter of keeping or losing the image of God as a content ... but of referring the image *toward* that *unto which* it is like ... The image consists only in the tension of referring itself to that *to* which it means to resemble. It appears only as this movement *toward*, and only this *intentio ad* keeps a likeness.

Thus, one is required to know the God whom one is to become "like" only by the *intentio ad Deum*, which occurs in searching for the self who, simultaneously, will be found only by searching for God. And the increasingly accurate portrayal of who one is, is only and ever a perennial quest, in which one "falls towards" – *ad te* – through a focused intention towards – *intentio ad Deum* – and which, one is proposing, may also be heard when one is listening to, reflecting upon, and valuing as meaningful the tones heard in the cadential space of one's own life. Significantly, for Augustine, while one is in time and searching to know who one is, one is on a relentless pilgrimage of searching inwardly into the space of the self (Hanby 1999:111-112; *Confessions* IX. i).

Thus, *pace* Begbie (2000; 2007; 2013), the forward dynamic of music's movement, one suggests, is the less promising aural incantation of the self, than the spatial depth of chordal and choral composition, which, with its overtones, more than merely ornaments a melodic line. But such a conception of music's worth, in this respect, resides in the stilling of music's motion. This "stillness" of music may be heard in the works of the late twentieth-century composer, John Tavener (1944-2003).

Although compositional continuity is not absent from the Tavener before and after his reception into the Russian Orthodox Church in 1977, a greater restraint of ornamentation and elaboration is evident during the subsequent period, which is not necessarily a denial of space, but a form of singular spatial concentration: in terms of prayer, the transition from meditation to contemplation. As Begbie (2000: 33) notes, in evoking a sense of "space" and "concept", these compositions create "a contemplative ambience" (Begbie 2000:133), an aural "space" that "

> appears to involve the avoidance, even the negation of time ... the restraint of directionality ... multiplicity, change and motion, and

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(Rom. 12:2), and elsewhere he says, *Be therefore imitators of God as most dear sons* (Eph 5:1)".

> the evasion of clearly defined beginnings and endings (Begbie 2000:136).

Begbie (2000:137; original emphasis) abjures such works categorically, maintaining that Tavener "eschews and subverts many of the artifices which give tonal music its characteristic *directionality* and goal-orientation". However, Begbie's (2000; 2007; 2013) objection in a project, which, supposedly, is to promote music's gift to theology, if one may be forthright, appears too constrictive. It singularly foregrounds a univocal conception of music, which serves one particular and evangelical theological agenda – that of the κήρυγμα. Begbie (2000; 2007; 2013) persistently returns to an embedded conception of temporal, progressive, and telic-orientated motion evident in the Doctrine of Creation, and of the significance of the temporal motion of music's covenant with time.

Thus, even in a work of Tavener's before his reception into the Russian Orthodox Church, which draws upon the writings of John of the Cross, Begbie (2000:131; emphasis added) finds that there is a "sustained attempt *to still* the perception of temporal motion", which, surely with respect to the content of the Spanish Carmelite's poetic corpus, appears somewhat appropriate. Begbie's (2007: 223 – 224; 261) rejection of some of the compositions of Messiaen, and most of the *opera* of Tavener and Pärt is owing to their evocation of "timeless eternity", and that they inspire an "escape" from temporal human reality. Begbie (2007:179-180) cites with approval Sir James MacMillan's (1959-) unease about the "music of the holy minimalists" of the "New Simplicity" movement – music which is "mono-dimensional", "iconic", with "no sense of conflict", and "in a kind of transcendent state" – but the spatial exploration of music's sounds do not demand an absence of agonistic tension both in returning words and chordal modulations, and which may be deemed present within MacMillan's[14] corpus, as well as among the works of the South African composer, Peter Klatzow.[15] Music's space – its probing depth and its

14 For MacMillan, his *Strathclyde Motets* involve "a different approach to time" from that of his *Missa Brevis*, with the result that "there's a kind of suspended animation about them. They don't seem to go anywhere, they kind of float ... and there are one or two ideas that sort of ease into being and just exist" (from interview in CD booklet of the recording, 18-21 April 2007:6-7).

15 Peter Klatzow's composition for choir and solo cello, *The Beatitudes* (2013), which was given its premiere performance at the National Festival of the Arts in Grahamstown, 12 July 2015, repeats the word "Blesséd", not only in English, but also in Xhosa, German, Latin, Italian, Greek, Afrikaans, and Hebrew. A spatial dimension is evoked both by repeating the nominative in English and in the other languages, and by being sung (for example, by the bases), while,

reaching height – is not without tension, argument, and dissonance which, one is endeavouring to claim, is of interrogative significance when searching for one's own self in the on-going discovery of one's identity, and when seeking answers to the probing meaning of being human.

7. CONCLUSION

For the Christian pilgrim, who seeks to know the self, the tones that answer the self's questing search for *Quis ego et qualis ego?* (*Confessions* IX. i), which, if they share resonances with others who hear them, ultimately are the notes of one's own compositional becoming through one's own cadential falling towards God – *ad te* – who is one's rest.

Dyrness's (2011:151) recent challenge to Begbie's (2000) alliance of music and time, and their joint relevance to theology, led him to state that it is in the space, rather than in the time, of music that "the Orthodox believer Tavener wants to say that music can do something more" than merely sound "the temporal and interpenetrating dynamics of God's creation". As a consequence, this Reformed scholar wondered whether, possibly, music might be "a kind of icon, *transparent to its eternal ground*" (Dyrness 2011:151; emphasis added).

This somewhat reluctantly expressed speculation, which questions music's temporal entrapment, partially has provoked these deeply contestable and nascent reflections on music's spatial promise. Returning to Augustine's question, *Quis ego et qualis ego?* (*Confessions* IX. i), a question that compels an inward search to find the self, one has proposed that, on this journey, one also listens for and to the sounds that reverberate in the only place that one can seek one's self, in one's memory, and to allow for their construal as tonal answers to the question: *Quis ego et qualis ego?* (*Confessions* IX. i). The self who is inward, and the God who is more inward than one's inward self, is a self who acts in time and is fashioned temporally, but who also is, if known at all, then known in the inward space of the self, and structured, formed, and known spatially. When this self is also and only known by knowing itself as it is known by God, then this self finds tonal intimations of its own self that also and simultaneously intone the God, who, it is the Christian claim, is the very ground of one's beseeching when asking: *Quis ego et qualis ego*? (*Confessions* IX i).

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simultaneously, the predicate of each "beatitude" is sung (for example, by the sopranos, altos, and tenors).

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