

SUMMARY

I BACKGROUND

My interest in the history of interpretation was triggered when I visited the Norwegian composer, poet and collector Arne Dørumsgaard in Marzio (Northern Italy) for the first time in 1987. There I could listen to different recordings of the same piece of music documented with nearly a hundred years of performance practice. As a lecturer in music history and analysis for students at the Music Conservatory in Stavanger, this was what I was looking for in order to reshape the curriculum towards the interest of coming musicians. Dørumsgaard donated his collection to the Norwegian Institute of Recorded Music in Stavanger, and I have had the privilege of being affiliated with the Institute as consultant in musicology from the beginning.

I found ideas from the New Musicology movement with its openness to music performance interesting, and started to study other collections and the history of recording. I chose recordings of Grieg's opus 5 no.3 Jeg elsker Dig as my topic for this dissertation because it was obviously the most recorded of Grieg's song and because it represented a song with a potential to be used in different settings. The commercialisation of the gramophone industry came immediately after the invention of the phonograph. In the record company technicians and finance people gained more power than the artistic leader. This is however in sharp contrast with the publishing of books, where it took several hundred years from Gutenberg's invention until the publishers' commercial interests dominated the (repertoire of the) book market. The difference between music and literature both as written documents, (oral) performance and in commercialisation today is a result of the differences connected to the knowledge profile in the record company and in the publishing house.

II MELODIES OF THE HEART

The 21-year-old Edvard Grieg bought the 15 volumes of H. C. Andersen's *oeuvre* in the summer 1864. The eight poems of "Melodies of the Heart", written in 1830, made a strong impression on Grieg, who at the same time fell in love with his cousin Nina Hagerup. He picked four poems, rearranged the order of the poems, and made the four lines in Jeg elsker Dig into six, adding the core sentence "Jeg elsker Dig" twice as a new 4.line and repeating the conclusion "Jeg elsker Dig i Tid og Evighed!" as the new sixth line. His opus 5 was given to Nina at Christmas and was published by Horneman in Copenhagen in April 1865. New publications came from Wilhelm Hansen (Copenhagen) in 1879 and by C. F. Peters (Leipzig) from 1875. The song became very popular, and in addition to being published in song volumes, it was published separately (by Peters alone 1883-1906 in more than 60.000 copies!).

When the text was translated into German, it gained another stanza, and it is this German version with two stanzas that has been used for all other translations (into more than twenty languages). There are many changes from the manuscript to the printed editions approved of by Grieg. I have pointed out several deviations between the manuscript and the first editions, which are not commented on in the Grieg Gesamtausgabe (Peters 1990). There is also a detailed commentary on the different interpretation elements throughout the song where I underline the duality of the text between the sensual "Jeg elsker Dig/ I love but thee" and the moral obligation "i Tid og Evighed! /now and eternally!"

III NATURE AND DESIGN OF THE PROJECT

The gramophone (and later the radio) represented a new possibility for people to listen to music. There was no need for music sheets, score, music instruments and musicians and no need for the ability to read music, in order to establish a listening position. This made possible a fundamental change in human development from the beginning of the 20th century, where music was made independent of musicians and their knowledge/tradition. The result was that we developed several listening strategies that were partly determined by the music, partly by the context we were listening, and partly by our own history and consciousness.

While in the concert tradition the goal was to present different works of art from the history of music, the diversity of interpretation came into focus in the commercial gramophone record. This process could be called a democratisation of the canon of the music history as the gramophone record represented a new and wider distribution of these pieces and as listening to a record was independent of reading abilities and the social setting of a concert.

Two main development trends have dominated the recording industry in the 20th century: 1) the technical development managing sound as acoustic via electric to digital signal, and 2) the development of new listening strategies and markets. I suggest a polarity in the market based on the difference between a) interpretations focusing on aesthetic content in a historically oriented tradition, and b) interpretations focusing on expressive content in the immediacy of the context. I use the terms concert and commercial tradition to indicate the direction of an interpretation. I do not say that any of these is more correct, because the legitimacy of an interpretation depends on the listener's position (frame of mind). With the continuum of interpretations divided into two extreme points the main approach focused on the following question: ***What makes a recording of Jeg elsker Dig belonging to either the concert tradition or the commercial tradition.***

To give an answer to this challenge, it is necessary to detect how the interpretations have changed over these hundred years. I will be doing this by studying the text that has been used, arrangements and orchestrations, changes in tempo (also within the different sections of the song) changes in form and dynamics and the sonority (both the sound scape and the sound image). I will discuss three main background causes for these changes; changes in the recording industry, in our listening strategies, and individual changes caused by the personal differences of the interpreter. It will also be necessary to discuss whether this song needs a renewal, because all music, as social constructions, requires maintenance from one or all of its constituents: the composer, the performer and the listener.

The gramophone record is not only a sound carrier; it also transmits cultural heritage. But the record has its own identity, which makes the documentation of a performance practice a subordinate matter. For the record industry, the artist/performer is much more important than a fraction of the cultural heritage transmitted. The gramophone industry has shown a policy of magnitude in content, and by publishing their catalogues and journals they have changed what kind of knowledge is important in music. In this way the gramophone industry has partly changed the content and structure of the cultural heritage.

IV METHODOLOGY

Traditionally, the judgement of a recording would be based on a comparison with the composer's score (or intentions). The listener and the type of consequence a music experience could bring forth are seldom discussed. The traditional way of analysing an interpretation would be very wrong for those interpretations that not at all tried to fit the concert tradition. Therefore, I wanted to explore the possibilities for a theory that could take into account the whole spectrum of interpretations that listeners have bought as recordings of Grieg's op.5 no.3. I made use of

some theories in music aesthetic, analysis (theory) and cognition, and I was particularly interested in the way they described our consciousness (perception), the connection between music and social context, and especially how the argumentation was built (was the score the ultimate argument?). This is because music experience is a part of our consciousness and that hints about how the author thinks this works, would pop up in theories in music aesthetics. A musical expression is a result of a choice among music and social possibilities and limitations. All theory will have a structure that enables us to weigh different arguments within the theory.

I find Hanslick's *Vom-Musikalisch-Schönen* useful in writing about an analysis of a score due to its focus on the specific (internal) musical elements, but with his naive trust to the methods of science, the music work becomes a non historic object and the possibilities to discuss the importance of interpretation traditions are blocked. He accepts only one kind of listening strategy but his description leaves a ghost in the machine/consciousness (there is a man inside looking at impressions of emotions with his rationality in order to get an aesthetic impression).

As an alternative to Hanslick I have chosen the discussion of similarities between music and language from Cooke's *The Language of Music*, via Langer's symbolism (*Philosophy in a New Key*) and Coker's music as gesture (*Music & Meaning*) to music as semiotics (*Raymond Monelle: Linguistics and Semiotics in Music*). Linguistics and semiotics have enriched musicology with new analytical tools and a new theory on how musical meaning is established. (This is an alternative to the hermeneutic theory in the 20th century, a tradition I do not comment on here). In establishing a descriptive history of interpretation, theories expanding on the relation between music and language can show both possibilities and restrictions in description of consciousness as well as the relation between music and social context and in a discussion on how linear or hierarchical an argumentation can or should be.

When analysing different interpretations of Jeg elsker Dig on gramophone records, the distinction between music analysis and music critique becomes unimportant, mainly because both traditions have a strong connection to the music score as the ultimate argument. There are few considerations relating to the listener in these theories, and usually it can be placed under the category of "folk psychology". The terminology used in analysis and music critique is important for the development of listening strategies, and by that also the position of music in different social settings, even if the theories themselves do not expose this domain.

The connection between the perceptual qualities of the sound, its abstract representation in memory, its identity and the magnitude of meanings and associations to other objects in the listener's context is a result of a process in several stages. I describe this process of musical cognition successively as a bottom-up and a top-down process. Four stages are detected even if different authors name them differently. The first of these is usually not commented on in top-down models, but it represents the important change from mechanical sensory energy to cognitive energy of which the brain can use in its different systems of cognition. I point out that the sonority is the most immediate impression of any sound, and therefore, most theories on musical cognition go wrong by reducing the process at basilar membrane to detecting the pitch and rhythms only. When combined with the fact that music notation is best on pitch/melody, quite many theories in music cognition use the music score as the ultimate argument in discussions on interpretation and performance of music.

I have tried to show that the validity of a musical experience is not necessarily linked to the musical notation. Establishing an interpretative element is basic to all kinds of knowledge in listening to music, and I define an interpretative element as any differentiating element in meaningful concepts. It is not necessary to be able to identify these differentiating elements, but

by doing this I say farewell to a linear and accumulative description of our perception of the world. I find this step necessary in order to bring the cognitive structures closer to the sonority of music and by this way non-verbal concepts become more easily combined on all stages of the cognition process.

Establishing interpretative elements will take place in the second stage, auditory grouping, after the sensory transition has changed the auditory signals into a kind of energy that activates the brain. The Gestalt principles seem to be a good terminology for describing this process, but I emphasise that the content of these principles may be changed based on each person's bodily experiences. This would also influence his/her ability to discriminate sounds, which in turn affects his/her musicality and listening strategies.

The next step is the establishment of signs. These signs are expressions of a subjective meaning, i.e. the differentiating element of an interpretative meaning, will now be combined with the listener's own subjective references (his population of possible explanations). This process individualises the listening and can explain different experiences among listeners. I do not see this establishing of signs as something special to music appreciation, and I adopt Piaget's terminology of adaptation (with assimilation and accommodation). Signs being meaningful and intentional, and therefore wider than the interpretative elements, open for establishing of the listener's expectation of musical events.

The final point in this process will be the establishing of a meaningful cognitive musical structure. Such a structure will be a system of transformations characterised by totality, transformation, and self-regulation. The specific musical in such a structure would be the actual content and that these three characteristics also cover three basic elements in music appreciation: the holistic approach, the expectation and the finality of a musical experience.

The gramophone record released music from its links to a specific social context and new ways of listening could be used on musical works with traditional listening strategies. Each person's development of new listening strategies is combined with a constant flow of new interpretations (not only new performances) of the same musical work. Establishing a meaningful cognitive musical structure cannot be based on the musical work alone; there is indeed a need for contextual argumentation.

First of all, it would be impossible to establish an authentic listening position as a situation in which the musical work exists without any (subjective) interpretation. The possibilities to take away these subjective impulses have been part of aesthetic theory since Kant. The ways I describe the cognition process, especially the establishment of interpretative elements, make it impossible to separate the subjective and the sensual in the cognition process. In Bourdieu's terminology, aesthetic consumption then becomes part of ordinary consumption. He points out that the quality of a musical experience is primarily based on the listener's level of education, and secondly on his/her social background.

I find Bourdieu's analysis of the three classes in society mostly appropriate and it can contribute to avoiding a total relativism when leaving the hierarchical argumentation for a contextual one. But sometimes his characterisations of the petit bourgeois listener have not taken into account the free distribution of the gramophone record's across social boundaries. The legitimacy of culture is bound up with a special social setting (room), but the record can distribute cultural expressions without any connection to its original social setting. Thereby, even the petit bourgeois listener can develop a competence that makes him/her part of the legitimacy of culture.

If a performance was the result of an interpretation of the musical score only, it would not bring such a variety in recordings of *Jeg elsker Dig* as I have detected, or I would have had to exclude a lot of interpretations presented and bought as Grieg's opus 5.no.3. It is the expressive qualities of the acoustical sounding musical work that has opened the diversity of interpretations. But then a musical work is not possible to establish without a listener. The musical work becomes a social construction based on three personalities; the composer, the performer and the listener. For the listener, the performer comes in front and the tradition "how to perform *Jeg elsker Dig*" develops as a combination of renewal and omission.

V RESULTS

The chronological discography contains 318 unique recordings of *Jeg elsker Dig*, from Otta Brønnum's recording 6.November 1899 and until today. I have the sound from 214 of these recordings, which I then could analyse also for expressive qualities. I have divided the gramophone history according to the big changes in technology: 1899-1925 the acoustical era, 1926-1955 the electrical era, 1956-1985 the stereophonic era, and 1986-2005 the digital era. I have divided this composition in sections (15 sections for each of the two stanzas), and used registration of tempo deviations between each of these sections. Most research on expressive qualities has been done without using the piano introduction and ending. In addition, I have made an analysis of the sound scape and the sound image in each recording. With a supplement of background information about the singer and the recording, I developed some answers to the questions mentioned above.

The average tempo in performing *Jeg elsker Dig* has not changed over these 100 years. It began with German as the main language (the German Lied tradition was still dominating in the beginning of the 20th century). But from 1930-50, English speaking performances got the biggest share of the market (something happened in Germany those days). From 1950-70 no language was dominant, but since 1970 Norwegian/Danish pronunciation has got over 50% of the market. Grieg wrote this song only with piano accompaniment, and in the acoustical era this was the norm. But in the two first decades of electrical recordings arrangements for orchestra and for ensembles became the most popular. From the 1970s the piano took over again.

Even if the average tempo has not changed, there are differences in tempo between recordings at all times. In order to make comparisons, I defined the first text line as the tempo of the actual performance. Then I could compute the relative change in tempo for each section and then compare all the different recordings. There seems to be a common understanding among singers where to push in and where to hold back in the different sections of this song (even if this does not correspond totally with the manuscript or printed editions). The shape of the curve of deviations is the same in all four eras of recording history, with the exception of the two accompaniment sections where there has been a change from playing faster than the tempo in the acoustical era, to playing slower in the digital era.

Adding the deviations in each section in a performance and then comparing the results between records analysed as concert tradition or commercial tradition shows a significant difference between these two ways of interpretation. This significant difference is also detectable in most of the sections taken separately. Calculating the standard deviation in each section shows that the width of variation is bigger in the concert tradition than in the commercial tradition. Most interesting is that the standard deviation is relatively stable in the first half of the century, but then falls to another level for the rest of the century. This change is detectable as an overall effect and is specially related to the language of performance and also to the performer's voices.

The manuscript and the Scandinavian editions of *Jeg elsker Dig* have only one stanza. But as Peters edition has an extra stanza, without any repetition marks, the performance comes out in a different form. Even if the singer uses Norwegian/Danish, it has been customary to sing the text twice. Only when the authenticity movement bloomed from the 1970s, performances in its original form became more prominent. Even so, the two-stanza version has the strongest position in the market.

I did not find any systematic difference in the use of dynamic expressions between the two traditions, but in the use of reverberation the commercial recordings go beyond normal concert hall acoustics into much longer reverberation time. They also prefer a much tighter microphone placement, especially in the electrical era. In the digital era the sopranos have taken more than 50% of the market while in the acoustical era sopranos, tenors and baritone-singers shared most of the market equally.

All results taken together indicate a continuum in the interpretation of *Jeg elsker Dig* both historically and systematically. The polarity between a concert tradition and a commercial tradition was found to be illustrative to the material even if there were few interpretation elements that were exclusive.

VI CONCLUSIONS

The history of music recordings has made important contributions to the general development of cultural life in the 20th century. Traditionally the score has been taken as representative for music in ontological discussions. As a consequence, the decoding process, with its effect on our listening, becomes a central component in constituting music. In my discussion of theories in music aesthetic, analysis, and cognition, I have pointed out how this tradition has limited the possibilities to formulate a theory of the musical experience when listening to gramophone records. Those actions that need to be done in order to play records has nothing in common with the decoding of a score or the performance practice in music. This changes the ontological status of music, which develops a greater interest in the final product (the performance) and a better understanding of the possibilities of several interpretations. When the stylus digs into the groove of the record, it is not searching for a historical document of a musical work, but for a soundscape to fit the musical expressions of the performer's interpretation.

Grieg's *Jeg elsker Dig* was written in 1864 as part of the concert (the German Lied) tradition. Being a love-song, it became very popular, and when the gramophone industry was established, this was a very popular song to record (50 different recordings in the first ten years of gramophone history). The multitude of musical genres in the gramophone business opened for interpretations of *Jeg elsker Dig* directed to another market than those who wanted a copy of a concert situation. Both the beginning of the electrical and the digital era was dominated by commercial interpretations, which also confirmed that the gramophone companies wanted their new technology to be spread as fast as possible (the commercial market being larger than the concert market).