

Facets of experience —Interviews on music and emotion in encounter with Frede Nielsen's theory on multifaceted meanings in music experience

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ABSTRACT

This article investigates music experience using interview data in an encounter with Frede V. Nielsen's model and theory on a multifaceted universe of musical meaning. Originally, the data was conducted to gather knowledge on music and emotion, but as it turned out, the 10 qualitative interviews also revealed interesting aspects about the many ways we experience music. Nielsen's model is used to analyse the empirical material further in relation to different layers or facets of experience, providing the research question(s): How can interview data on music and emotion contribute to our understanding of music experience, and how can Frede Nielsen's model on a multifaceted universe of musical meanings contribute in such knowledge development? The interviews, as well as Nielsen's model, was primarily defined within a hermeneutic and phenomenological frame. To some extent, the article is also inspired by postmodern (e.g. relational and interstitial) thinking and a scientific tradition encouraging subject–subject encounters. The results reveal that all the interview data on music and emotion can contribute to our understanding of music experience, and that all the layers of Nielsen's model are relevant. However, the model seems to lack an explicit relational or intersubjective layer of meaning, which clearly appears in the interviews.

Keywords: music experience, musical meaning, emotion, interview, Frede V. Nielsen

Introduction

This article investigates music experience as it appears in interview excerpts on music and emotion (Vist, 2009) in an encounter with Frede V. Nielsen's model and theory on a multifaceted universe of musical meanings (Nielsen, 1983, 1988, 1994, 2012). However, the data material involved has a longer story: In analysing interviews about music and emotion, or more specifically, music experience as a mediating tool for emotion knowledge (Vist, 2009), it became clear that the interviews contained descriptions that exceeded the topic of emotion knowledge. As a side aspect to the primary focus and research question, a short preliminary analysis on different perspectives of music experience was conducted. With no explicit theoretical foundation, but grounded in the verbal terms and metaphors used by the interviewees, the material was loosely divided into 19 'sub-categories' and further arranged into four primary perspectives. When investigated further, this quartered categorization did not seem sufficient, at least not in its categorical consistency. Hence, this article presents a second round of analysis on the material, with slightly changed research questions, and with Frede V. Nielsen's model and theory on a multifaceted universe of musical meanings (Nielsen, 1983, 1988, 1994, 2012) as the main theoretical perspective in the encounter with the interview data.

The aim of this article is primarily to contribute to new knowledge on music experience by presenting and inquiring about the mentioned interview excerpts. Nonetheless, the analysis had a tendency towards a 'Buberian' or phenomenological aim for subject–subject encounters, as well as postmodern 'interstitial' thinking (Bourriaud, 1998/2002; Irwin & Springgay, 2008), putting *the encounter* between data and theory at the forefront. As a result, the second aim is to unfold and discuss Nielsen's multifaceted theory. Within Nielsen's theory, it is the layered model that will be in focus, Nielsen's way of describing the "[c]orrespondence' between music and us" (Nielsen, 2012: 21) will only be briefly touched upon. If Nielsen's claim, that the layers "belong together because they are heard together" (2012: 21) is correct, all the layers could also be explicit in the interview data on music and emotion. Thus, the research question will be: *How can interview data on music and emotion contribute to our understanding of music experience, and how can Frede Nielsen's model on a multifaceted universe of musical meanings contribute in such knowledge development?*

Nielsen's model on a multifaceted universe of musical meanings

Although defining his theory as "phenomenologically oriented" in 2012 (Nielsen, 2012: 19), earlier versions claim it to be phenomenological *and* hermeneutic (1983, 1988, 1994). Nielsen (1983) also attempts to bridge gaps between different research

traditions, and in the introduction to their 1988 article, Nielsen and Vinther (1988) argue against loyalty to a single ideal or scientific method, advocating to keep the tension and integration of the two opposite components of autonomy and heteronomy in aesthetics. This also gives me the courage to see the relevance of a slightly more postmodern stance in this article, and not to include the *Bildung* perspective so often connected with his theory (e.g. Hanken & Johansen, 1998; Nielsen, 1994, 2012).

In Danish, Nielsen's theory was presented as a '*mangespektret meningsunivers*' (1988, 1994). In English, he uses the term *multi-dimensional*, in addition to the *multi-spectral* universe of meaning (Nielsen, 2012), while others have used the terms *multifarious* (Varkøy & Westby, 2014) and *multifaceted* (Pio, 2015). Despite the ball metaphor in what Nielsen (2012: 20) names "a stratified spherical model", Nielsen's model is to me quite two-dimensional, the line going from outer to inner "layers of meaning in the musical object" (ibid.). When I choose Pio's multifaceted metaphor in this article, it is because it better affords the possibility of three dimensions and hence more relations between the facets. Nevertheless, this is less faithful to the original theory, in which the layers gradually merge into each other like in the colour *spectrum*, and which emphasize surface, middle and core (or deep) layers.

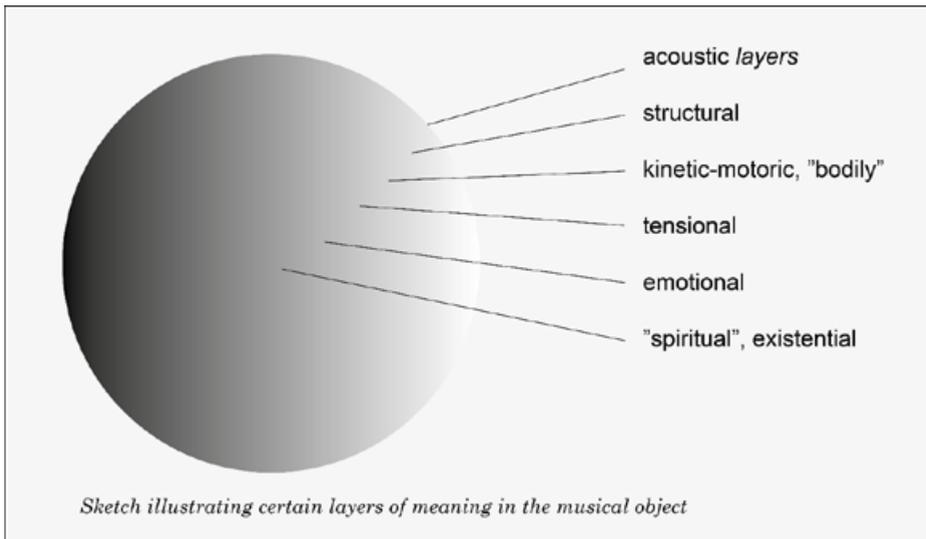


Figure 1: Music as a multifaceted universe of musical meaning (Nielsen, 1998: 136, English version from Pio, 2015: 34)

In the surface levels of this globular model, one first finds the acoustic layer, then the structural layer. Nielsen underscores that "the experiencing of music comprises much

more than the musical structural interplay”, and that it “involves ‘more deeply’ situated dimensions of meaning. For example, we directly experience processes of energy and tension” (Nielsen, 2012: 19). It is interesting that the tensional layer is placed in the middle region, which is therefore considered a deeper layer than the (often cognitive) experience in the structural layer. It is also interesting that the kinetic-motoric bodily layer is put next to it, still in the middle part of the model, and not in the deep core. After all, phenomenologically speaking, the body is claimed to be the fundament of any experience (Merleau-Ponty, 1945/2002). The second deepest layer, the emotional one, is important in Nielsen’s descriptions, as it is in the interviews. Nielsen (2012: 19) writes that “the idea that music is above all emotionally charged (‘attuned’), and that it communicates and also causes emotions is widespread”. Yet, an even ‘deeper’ layer—“that must be added in certain circumstances” (2012: 20)—is the one he calls spiritual and existential. Thus, what is deep or not, or if ‘deep’ is the best term for this, can be questioned, and not only in relation to the ‘body as fundament’ or ‘emotion above all’ as above. In taking the perspective of Lakoff and Johnson (1980/2003), and admitting that I also use ‘deep’ in relation to what I see as the core or essence in being, it is easier to recognize that ‘deep’ is a metaphor in this context, with connotations related to both culture and value. Furthermore, the layers themselves, defined by Nielsen as rather consistent in the Western classical discourse he addresses, could also be discussed (and will be below). According to Nielsen’s former colleague and student, Sven-Erik Holgersen,¹ and in line with the phenomenological tradition, Nielsen did not want us to consider his model as definitive or unchangeable. With the 21st century’s changing hegemony of musical genres, these layers may even have changed more rapidly than Nielsen anticipated, as is the case with the suggested relational layer mentioned below.

As is common in phenomenologically inspired thinking, “the aesthetic object and the aesthetically experiencing subject cannot be discussed adequately and understood in isolation from each other” (Nielsen, 1983: 315). Describing the two well-known basic positions of autonomy/absolutism vs. heteronomy/referential aesthetics, Nielsen mentions emotions as an example of something seen as external to the music in these positions.² Nielsen (2012: 21) advocates a third position attempting to exceed the line between subjective and objective, as well as form and content, thus also claiming that “[t]he outer structure leads into, and is reciprocally anchored in, other more deeply situated layers of meaning”. According to Nielsen (2012: 20), these layers are perceived as object qualities, and “must phenomenologically be viewed as qualities adhering to

1 Private conversation 9 March 2016.

2 However, Reimer (1989) gives emotions a more exclusive position within an absolute expressionism.

(and embodied in) the musical object itself". Letting such well-known phenomenological ideas encounter more postmodern thoughts, like a social-emotional approach to emotions (Denham et al., 2003) and Bourriaud's (1998/2002) relational aesthetics, interesting potential for experience appears: In Bourriaud's theory, artworks are judged on the basis of the inter-human relations, also viewing *the intersubjective relations* as 'qualities adhering to (and embodied in) the (musical) object itself'.

As one last element of Nielsen's model, the experiencing subject is considered an *integral* part of the process. Nielsen claims that

(...) there exists a potential and fundamental '*correspondence*' (...) between layers of meaning in the music and, on the other hand, layers of experience and consciousness in human beings. (...) by the fact that in the musical object a subjective structure is "embodied", and that through this embodiment the subject structure assumes an objective form (2012: 22).

Simply said, there is a connection between the experienced music and the one experiencing the music (Nielsen, 1988).

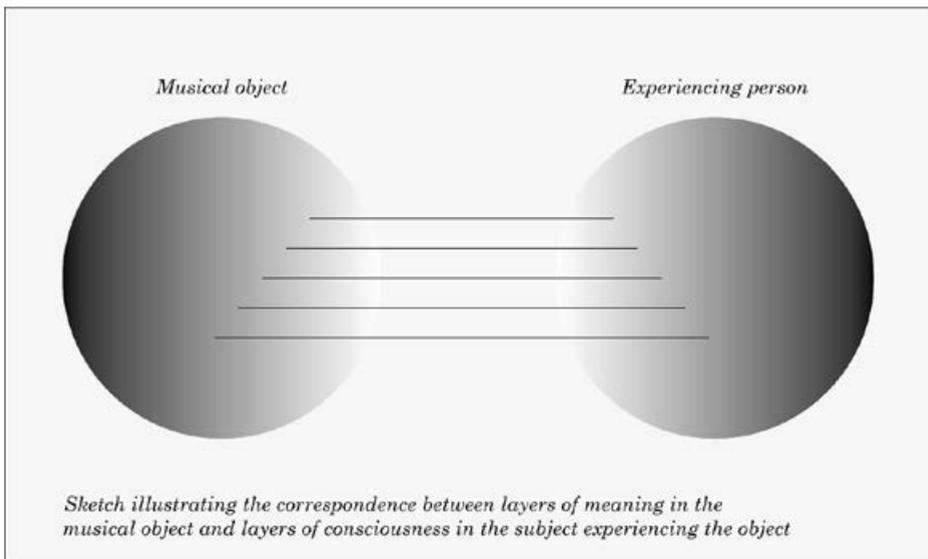


Figure 2: Nielsen's notion of correspondence (Nielsen, 1998: 137, English version from Pio, 2015: 35)

However, In Nielsen's theory, this seems literally to be the single *one* experiencing; the consciousness is clearly on an individual level, creating explicit aspects of the

person's self, identity, and existence. The person's intersubjective relations are hardly touched upon, far less an intersubjective consciousness, as described in Vist (2009). Even so, I do not find anything in the theory explicitly *against* the possibility of such intersubjective relations, particularly not in the spiritual and existential layer.

The interview data

As previously mentioned, the data was collected in relation to a PhD project on music experience as a mediating tool for emotion knowledge. The PhD project was conducted within a hermeneutic-phenomenological approach, although some discursive tendencies reveal a stance between prototypes, as argued in Vist (2009: 37f). The empirical material consists of excerpts from 10 interviews of Norwegian adults, including five women and five men; five were music professionals, and five were amateurs. The interviews began with a question asking whether they could describe a music experience, preferably a strong one, which was related to emotions. This descriptive part was followed by questions that encouraged the interviewees to interpret and reflect upon their experiences, thus taking the interviews in slightly more hermeneutic (Van Manen, 2001) and phenomenographic directions (Marton & Booth, 1997).

I transcribed all the interviews from the mini disc recording. It was done almost word-for-word, and at the expense of good written language. The English translation also stays close to the original; however, the metaphors in use have led to a translation in which understanding has been more in focus, sometimes at the expense of word-for-word similarity. In the excerpts, the following additional signs were used: "(...)" refers to parts of the interview left out, "..." refers to unfinished, uninterrupted sentences, "[" refers to interruption and "[]" refers to the two participants talking at the same time. Parentheses such as "(music piece)" indicate that words are changed to hide the identity of the interviewee and the persons described, or that a word is added to make the short excerpt meaningful and in relation to the rest of the text.

The music experiences were originally grouped into four perspectives. In *the structural perspective*, the subcategories included *manners of meeting*, *music elements*, and *genres*, thereby close to Nielsen's acoustic and structural layers. *The referential perspective* comprised the subcategories of *describe*, *remember*, *reverberation*, and *embodied*. It can be related to several of Nielsen's layers, such as the kinetic-motoric or 'bodily' layer and the emotional and tensional layers. However, the most striking parallel with Nielsen's theory is in the aspect of correspondence. *The relational perspective* divided the material into *alone*, *interaction*, *dialogue*, *meeting*, *care*, and *acknowledgement*. This perspective is more difficult to place in Nielsen's theory, as is *the affording perspective*, which includes the subcategories of *open*, *abandon*, *awake*,

strengthen, care, and change. Both perspectives point to rather heteronomous approaches to musical meaning and—again—to several of Nielsen’s layers.

Nielsen delimits his model to be concerned about “notered kunstmusik” (Nielsen & Vinther, 1988), or music from the Western classical discourse. In the interviews, music from different genres is discussed on an equal footing. Nevertheless, when it comes to the definition of music experience, there is more uniting than separating it from Nielsen: In the preliminary interview analysis, the *work* of music was not as dominant as the individual, social and contextual *experience* of music—and is still not. The musical object alone will not do, we need to include an experiencing (and acting) human being (Vist, 2008). As Nielsen (2012: 20) puts it, the qualities of music “only manifest themselves by dint of our perceiving, acting and comprehending musical experience and consciousness”.

In the introduction to their 1988 text, Nielsen and Vinther write that experience should be understood in its widest meaning, including perception, imagination, embodied action, emotions, and more. They argue that any artwork in its full value has so many aspects that any idea of a fulfilling analysis is not in accordance with the artwork’s idea.³ I agree. In the interview project, the music experience was also defined widely, including peak experiences (Gabrielsson, 2001; Maslow, 1987), aesthetic experiences (Dewey, 1934/1980; Reimer, 1989, 2005) and music experiences in everyday life (DeNora, 2001, 2002). It was not limited to any particular genre, activity or context, and supported Ruud’s (2010: 10) claim that the way we experience music, and the way it inflects us, depend on the context, our background, and the music chosen. I still agree with this, but be aware that in this article (probably also more than Nielsen) I accept that elements previously seen as context can be experienced as “qualities adhering to (and embodied in) the *music* itself”, to adopt Nielsen’s phrase again (see below).

The terms *emotion, feeling, mood, and affect* are often used interchangeably (Grelland, 2005; Nyeng, 2006; Sloboda & Juslin, 2001:75; Sundin, 1995:50f). In the English literature, the term *emotion* is the one most frequently in use today (see Juslin & Sloboda, 2010), as also in this article. Well in line with Nielsen’s *multifaceted* theory, this article follows Scherer and Zentner’s (2001: 373, my italics) claim in that “emotions need to be seen as *multicomponential* phenomena”. Moreover, it is important to see emotions as changing processes rather than (only) steady states (Vist, 2009), especially in musical encounters, thus also making it relevant to include Stern’s (1985/2000) theory on vitality affects and affect attunement. This is also in line with Nielsen, in

3 “[E]t kunstverk I sin fulde valeur er en så mangespektret størrelse, at tanken om at bestemme det endeligt og udtømme det analytisk, eller at give det den eneste riktige og endegyldige udførelse, er en utopi og reelt set kunstærkets væsen fremmed” (Nielsen & Vinther, 1988: 9).

particular in his thorough investigation of tension (Nielsen, 1983) and the support he finds in Langer's *Philosophy in a new key* (Langer, 1942/1979).

Results

This part presents excerpts from the interviews, categorized in accordance with Frede Nielsen's model on a multifaceted universe of musical meaning, and also further analysed and inspired by Nielsen. Unfortunately, all six layers in Nielsen's theory have not been equally comprehensively defined before, maybe because they (within a European classical discourse) have been seen as 'natural'. In his doctoral thesis, though, he investigates "The Experience of Musical Tension" (Nielsen, 1983: 315); hence, the tension layer is well explained, and since his discussion of tension is related to the structural (and acoustic) layers, these layers are somehow explained as well. Additionally, several researchers have contributed to an understanding of the 'spiritual', existential layer (Pio & Varkøy, 2012; Varkøy & Westby, 2014), and since the interviews originally emerge from a music and emotion perspective (Vist, 2009), they will colour the article's definition of the emotion layer. It is the kinetic-motoric 'bodily' layer that is least clearly defined; consequently, this layer may also be understood more closely in terms of Vist's (2009) use of embodied (music experience) than only in terms of Nielsen's ideas. As early as in his doctoral thesis, Nielsen (1983) presents all six layers of meaning, but without the illustrating model. He also makes a division in a surface, middle, and core level, putting two layers in each.

Acoustic and structural layers (surface level)

A single acoustic sound can be played in an endless amount of meaningful ways. It can strike us in our stomach or heart and arouse emotions, varying in accordance with tone, colour, and dynamics. This sound usually relates to other sounds—as in an interval, or yet another one, as in a chord or motive—or as in the entire phrase, movement or piece—the structural layer according to Nielsen. Hence, these layers obviously merge, as seen in a spectrum. Although his structural layer is put "deeper" than the acoustic one, they are both considered to be "in the surface region", and "relatively concrete and thus verbally relatively easily described qualities" (2012: 20).

Several interviewees describe chord progressions as a source of strong musical experiences and emotional reactions, and other musical elements have important roles in other person's experiences. Amateur Bjørn mentions "the immensely beautiful

horn solo" (M2), and points to a short melody with its particular dynamics and colour of sound. Musician Einar also describe these layers:

I often have passages that I think about in pieces of music. Like: those two minutes, for example, or maybe it is not even two minutes but 30 seconds, which are special climaxes that I react very emotionally to. (M12)

(...) that very well could have to do with interesting, nice harmonics, like chords which you'd never thought could be combined. (...) And then, it was like a little, sharp point pricking in those passages, just like a little needle, and it may hurt a little or feel a little good. (M29)

When Einar hears music, he is "very inside the music, goes very technically into it, referring to other pieces of music...and I see myself in it" (M14). Hence, he confirms Nielsen's claims of correspondence between layers in the music and in the person, as well as in the connection between the surface layers and the deeper ones: The bodily and tensional one, as in "sharp point pricking", and the emotional and existential ones, as in "and I see myself in it." However, this does not mean that acoustic and structural layers must be related to a traditional referential perspective on music experience. In a not yet published excerpt, musician Daniel also claims:

I've never been interested in that [referential approach]. I've never understood it either, people who read music that way (...) That Ligt's piano concert can be winds, cascades, waterfalls, and that stuff. And I cannot remember that I did when I was young either. (M35)

The amateurs also point to the structural layer. For amateur Frida, musical structures are intertwined with the emotional and existential layers:

I am very fond of being surprised. In relation to originality, in relation to the composition of things, in relation to sounds, as you say, in relation to ways of putting together music. For me, that is fantastic, to be surprised. That is the most important aspect with music. And then again, this gives a reverberation in me, making me surprised also about my own emotional life. (M47)

Consequently, both amateurs and professional musicians are conscious about, and experience meaning in, these surface layers of music. However, from the excerpts, I am not sure the acoustic layer needs to be separated from the structural one, because

there seems to be some kind of structural meanings (“putting together music”) in most acoustic experiences, and when one points to a single tone, the acoustic and the bodily meanings obviously merge, as will be made clearer below. Without concluding, I am tempted to ask: Is there a separate acoustic layer of *meaning* in music experience? We do sense the music acoustically, but could it be that the acoustic layer is more like a prerequisite for the structural and other layers of *meaning* in music experience? None of the other layers can stand alone either, one could answer. Still, I suggest further investigation into what constitutes Nielsen’s acoustic layer—when it is not also structural or embodied.

Kinetic-motoric, ‘bodily’ and tensional layers (middle level)

Tension units in music can also be short or long—an interval, a phrase or a full movement, and related to different musical elements. According to Nielsen (1983: 316), “‘tension’ is assumed to be placed in the middle region of the object, connecting structural characteristics of the surface level with more deeply located strata of emotion and other strata of meaning”. It refers to the waves of energy that rise and decline with the different expressions in and with the experience of music. Nielsen also describes two main aspects of tension: one related to intensity, importance, etc., the other he calls kinetic-dynamic (thus, almost fusing the layers in the middle region of his model), related to direction, activity, conflict, etc. (Nielsen, 1983).

In line with his (later more) phenomenological stance, tension is “not only object-characteristic, but also act-characteristic” (2012: 20), it is not only “embodied” in the musical object, but also embodied in, or corresponds to, tension in the listening subject. Today, such ideas are also well expressed in (and known from) Stern’s (1985/2000) theory, previously used in encounters in the interviews (Vist, 2009). Inspired by Langer, both Nielsen and Stern (1985/2000) developed their ideas on correspondence at the same time. Using terms such as affect attunement, vitality affects, and corresponding vitality contours in the brain, Stern also explains how “the person’s own emotional universe” can be perceived as similar and attuned to “the person’s sensing of acoustic data”, to use Nielsen’s terms (2012: 22).

Despite the placement away from the core layers, Nielsen (1983) claims tension to be a very common term in everyday descriptions of music experiences. However, searching all the interviews for the similar Norwegian term, *spenning*, reveals that the term is only in use in two (out of 10) interviews, and only in one meaning unit in each interview. Both incidents describe rather professional classical traditions—in music (Carl) and ballet (Hanne). Carl claims there are relations of tension in serial or 12-tone music as well, but that in the (tonal) melody, “there are definitely relations of

tension. It has to do with harmony and rhythm.” (M39). Hanne talks about her ballet teacher teaching his students to use their body in feeling. That also includes where to put one’s limbs, what kind of tension to use, etc.: “We know in a way, which strings to pull, how to use the muscles and tensions to express certain things” (M68). This excerpt is in line with Nielsen’s physical understanding of ‘bodily,’ as well as with his understanding of tension. It also confirms that these two layers are connected, and that they present very “core” elements of music experience, despite Nielsen’s placement.

When inquiring about emotions (Vist, 2009), the tension layer appeared in the interviews closely connected to Stern’s (1985/2000: 156) vitality affects or “explosions and fading (...) those dynamic kinetic qualities of feeling”. For this reason, the forms of emotions became important in relation to music, as Langer (1942/1979; 1970) has also claimed before. Einar describes this clearly after suggesting that happiness and sorrow in music can be interchangeable, as what is important is the energy and texture of the happiness. He claims that music is more about “affects related to how you behave physically, or feels sensuously” (M67). Hence, these two middle layers are intertwined in the interviews as well.

In the preliminary analysis, the explicit embodiment sub-category was placed in the referential perspective, out of an argumentation that the first re-flection, re-ference or re-presentation will be in our body. Nielsen’s kinetic-motoric ‘bodily’ layer seems to point toward a rather corporal or physical understanding of the body. According to Nielsen and Vinther (1988: 8), the music experience can happen through or by our senses, our imagination, and our bodied activities and sensing (motorical, kinaesthetic). To define it as equal with the preliminary sub-category ‘embodied’ will not be fully in accordance with Nielsen’s understanding, nor fair to the interviewees. Still, inspired by Johnson (1990), I stretch Nielsen’s layer to include a potential “deeper” or “core” understanding of the body, thereby also tangential to emotional and existential layers of meaning, but more importantly: towards the understanding of the body as involved in all our encounters with the world and in an extended definition of ‘deep’ or ‘core’. “We are never separated from our bodies and from forces and energies acting upon us to give rise to our understanding” (Johnson, 1990: 205). To know something also includes embodied structures of understanding. Such structures come from the way we are, with our bodies, in the world, “they are recurring patterns in our dynamic experience as we move about in our world” (Johnson, 1990: 206), once again fusing the two middle layers.

While the sub-category *remember* (from the referential perspective) refers to memories, *reverberation* more explicitly refers to sensations in the body, in its focus on the sensuous feeling from the sound, in addition to what on a ‘deeper’ level (in Nielsen’s terms) gives its meaning. Frida talks about “a reverberation in me, which

makes me surprised about my own emotional life” (M47). Einar is referring to the same embodied and existential duplicity related to his own compositions:

When I have been playing, for instance in pieces I have written myself, (...) where I have a feeling when playing that “now we reached our target” (...) Then you are at a point where you are in contact with what you meant when you started this work, and this might be half a year ago, you feel like the voice in you is singing, in a way. (M4)

Although related to the body, the most striking aspect of reverberation is this sensuous feeling’s connection to the deeper layers of emotion and the (more existential) voice in you that is singing. From the affording perspective of the interviews, the encounters between the music and the body have results that are more concrete. Einar uses the needle as a metaphor:

And then it was like a little tip that stuck in those passages, just like a small needle. And it may hurt a bit or feel a bit good, and it will definitely not say whether it is joy or bereavement, it’s beyond that. But it is emotions. It is emotionality in a way, you’ll be triggered or you’ll be moved, (...) and it can trigger *this* or it can trigger *that*, depending on what mood you are in, and what you are susceptible to. But something is put into motion. Something is stimulated. Because something is stabbed, with this needle. (M32)

Also when analysing emotional reflection and understanding (Vist, 2009), the body was seen as the very first mediational tool: Frida experienced the music strongly in her body. When she tells how the music opens up something “unthought” and nonverbal, I asked her if the music concretizes it in any way, and she confirms that it becomes “geographized”, and that she can feel it in her body. She continues with: “... feel it very much, (...) I haven’t thought about it before, but it is like saying “yes, that’s how it is” (M9). So again, some kind of existential understanding becomes the result, and bodily grounded. It makes her recognize something she knows but can hardly put into words. When Frida compares music and literature (fiction), she claims that music “goes right in” (M34), while literature goes more to the head. Carl explains that “the primary reference is on the primitive stuff, heartbeats and when things go faster, it means something, and when it goes slower, it means something”. He further says this is hard to express in other ways than with music, “...cause it is sound waves hitting you straight in the carcass, which not only goes through the intellect” (M16).

In other situations, this embodiment is clearly connected with emotions. In-between the embodied and the emotional layer are interview excerpts in which music is described as being open for devotion. Frida tells about herself and her grandchild, and that while listening to music, she is very careful; she does not dare to use many words towards her grandchild, thus allowing the child to devote himself to the music. Daniel describes how good musicians “just devote themselves to the material” (M22). This devotion is also related to music affording a sense of being held, to let go (of control) as well as to open, and therefore also needs to be investigated as a relational phenomenon. However, the body may also stand in the way of music experiences. The technical requirements of the music inhibit the experience of several interviewees. Amateur Frida considers her modest performance experience as solely technique and trying to hit the right tone (M45), Bjørn as coping with no emotions involved (M28). Hanne describes her body as her violin while dancing (M64), but does not have the same good experience while playing an instrument:

I have practiced a lot on (this piece). Now I am trying to learn (another piece), but I really haven't mastered it. I feel a lot, but it doesn't come out, I cannot at all communicate it to myself or others. My body, on the other hand, my body I can trust. (M69)

Because of this, the bodily and tension layers can facilitate and intensify the music experience to the extent that I suggest it can be seen as being in the “cores” of music experience and musical meaning. However, there are also tensions and bodies that might restrain the experience, and as music educators, both these perspectives are important to consider in our teaching.

Emotional and ‘spiritual’, existential layers (deep/core level)

Excerpts related to Nielsen’s emotional layers could be found everywhere in the interviews. This is not surprising, considering their emotional topic (Vist, 2009, 2011b; Vist & Bonde, 2013). As seen above (e.g. Einar M12 and M29), layers of tension and body are often intertwined with emotion in music experience. This also confirms the (above) definition of emotions (in music experience) as changing processes as much as steady states. Furthermore, many of these excerpts support Nielsen’s idea of correspondence: “There are emotions which correspond to that psalm”, Gunn claims (M2) at the beginning of her interview. Later, she also tells about a boy in early childhood day care who exclaimed when listening to music that “[i]t is crying in those

sounds” (M74). Turning it the other way around, Hanne also points to the preferred correspondence of the emotions in the music to the emotions or mood within herself:

To me, all music is connected to lots of emotions. When I put on some music, I always have to consider what emotion I have at the moment. Sometimes I know, right away, what I want to listen to. I am very much *there* and need exactly *that*. However, it also happens that I put on some music and then: No, I turn it off, 'this was wrong'. (M17)

Here, even recorded music can be a way to express oneself. Music professional Carl (M57) describes the more exclusive opportunities playing and performing gives in relation to emotional expressions. Amateur Ivar agrees, describing that you can direct the emotions in the music playing the organ, “it goes directly out (of your fingers) into the music” (M22).

Different interviewees find meaning in different genres, and this relates to both musical structures and emotions. Frida (M13–14) tells how classical music stimulates her before doing intellectual work, but that she listens to jazz when she is happy. On the other hand, Einar claims jazz to be less important when it comes to emotions (M41), although jazz improvisation has some social qualities that can become a picture of how we function socially, which classical music lacks (M42). Ivar explains that “[b]lues, it’s a bit blue, salsa is more happy. And classical, I will claim, you can cover your whole life with” (M47). Carl agrees:

T: Are there emotions that in your opinion have nothing to do with music?

No.

T: None?

No. (...) I still haven’t heard an expression in popular music that can represent jealousy, for example, or envy.

T: Can you mention music from another genre that could represent jealousy or envy?

Yes, it is a (classical) concert, for example. It is poison-green, which is oozing out everywhere. It is very interesting. (M41)

He claims the reason for this difference is that, “[i]t demands a complicated structuring of the musical (material) to make you able to express that” (M45), which he considers classical music to have. Daniel is of another opinion:

Genres in a way become like gastronomy. You live somewhere, you have different qualifications, different raw materials, you construct a gastronomical culture according to the place (...) or location or conditions. (...) But for me, it's always about the same, and that is the emotional space. (M27)

Whether this “emotional space” is happiness or sorrow, music also strengthens the feeling, and most often in a good way (Janne M37, Bjørn M20, Gunn M41). “One thing, for sure, is that the music reinforces the mood we are in”, Bjørn claims (M70), and Hanne argues that “[m]y energy level becomes completely different with music” (M14). Ivar even describes music as an emotion turbo:

The music is only a catalyst for what's going on, or a small turbo for what I am doing. If you are sad, you become sadder, if you want to work out, you will give more, and if you want to become more happy, it can make you more happy. Thus, the music is a turbo, an emotion turbo (M20).

Also due to the interview topic, many excerpts reveal aspects of change and learning related to this emotional layer, thereby also pointing towards Nielsen's ‘deepest’ layer, the spiritual and existential one. Pio and Varkøy explain this layer as being related to existential questions such as “the problem of suffering, hope, time, death, belonging and coherence—individual existential experiences that clear the ground for a renewed contact with our own being” (2012: 103–104). Similarly, Varkøy and Westby include “[e]xperiences and reflections about choice, suffering, hope, joy, time, death, happiness, belonging and connection” (2014: 174). Several excerpts above actually also illustrate the existential layer, but in her interview, Gunn gets right to the point: “[W]e might find something else in the tonal arrangement and harmonies and sounds and rhythms. It might be life itself that is explained” (M75). Creating something and improvising with other musicians apparently also provides an opportunity to develop reflection and understanding (Daniel M15) and to explore oneself, both emotionally and socially (Einar M45). Bjørn claims that (listening to) “music is the most important source for keeping those channels open, metaphorically speaking, to keep the tear ducts functioning” (M38). Frida agrees: “I believe (the music experience) has helped me to hold on to, and remember an emotional availability, which I have in relation to music and which opens other doors inside me than other things (M13).

One of the most frequent metaphors is *to open (up)*, which is closely connected to the emotion availability. It seems like the music affords an opportunity to open up both inwardly and outwardly. As a part of the music experience, to open up is described as being redemptive, liberating, groundbreaking, transcendental and clarifying. This

opening quality is also related to expressions such as when the heart grows, to see new rooms, to see more dimensions or to reveal. Thus, as described in Vist (2009), the existential layer reveals intellectual, emotional, and embodied 'learning processes', and foremost what characterizes the layer is that all three elements are working holistically together, enlarging and strengthening the experience (Anna M3, M13). Frida claims: "This is hard to put in words, but it is like something is opening up inside me, (...) like when you experience: "yeahhh, ohh, there is that good stuff again" (M35). It is primarily connected to well-being and positive emotions, but Frida (M73) does not see it (nor Bjørn, see M38, above) as negative when music also opens up for crying.

The sub-category *to condense* is tightly connected with this kind of strengthening and sense of depth. It has qualities far beyond increasing strength or intensity, particularly when it comes to knowledge and aesthetic understanding. This goes right to the core of this author's definition of aesthetic experience, in which meaning condensation and to 'see much in something little' (Vist, 2000) is central. Carl talks about music experience as a condensation of moods:

As a film manages to tell about a person's life, you can gain an understanding about what that life was about in one and a half hours, which is something about the same. You have a piece of music which is rather short, and then you understand the points of references rather immediately [snaps his fingers], and then the composer puts his finger down on one point or another, which in a way... where all these references are gathered towards something, and then you have a depth. (M15)

The spiritual is less explicit above. Daniel is the interviewee who most clearly confirms the spiritual as part of music experience:

A kind of tranquility, a kind of clarity, what they in religious terms call bliss. (...) And there is a kind of presence in it, really like close to life, but it is neither pleasure nor grief, if you know, it's just [long exhalation].

T: Contact?

Yes, (...) I have been doing yoga for all these years, and we do such stuff, we use three weeks to get where I very easily could come by doing a concert, for example. It's very strange to experience; it's the same processes as within spirituality and religiosity (...). I think I have to use religious metaphors, because that's how I've learned to look at it. And it is an existence where time stands still, you don't count time, and therefore an experience in which

one is neither young nor old, only; one lives right there and also forever, if you understand. (M20–21)

Daniel is not sure if he “is emotional” in this room, but he claims: “I think I am experienced as much more emotional because I am much more myself” (M10). His descriptions provide associations with the flow-concept of Csikszentmihalyi (2002), as well as to meditational techniques. When Varela, Thompson and Rosch (1991: 27) discuss what brings us “from an abstract, disembodied activity to an embodied (mindful), open-ended reflection”, they use music as an ideal of being mindful. Consequently, different discourses may describe this differently, but the existential and spiritual layer is confirmed as relevant. Nevertheless, what is less explicit with Nielsen, but well documented in the interviews, is what Varkøy and Westby above described as a belonging and connection within this existential layer. In the interviews, this is often related to intersubjectivity and relevant for many layers, but best encountered with Nielsen in this one.

Several interviewees pronounce that the strongest music experiences are always together with others. Carl (M8) claims that as a musician, situations with a large public, “when things work [‘funker’ in Norwegian],” cannot be compared with anything. Anna (M3) describes listening together as a transcendental experience, involving the whole person strongly, cognitively, emotionally and bodily. Bjørn connects this layer explicitly to intersubjectivity:

Once, when I was (in another country) at Easter, I went to (this) cathedral which for sure had room for 2,000 people (...) It becomes in itself an emotional experience, only in the loudness, the power.

T: The dynamics?

The dynamics more than the lyrics, it’s a beautiful text too, sung in their mother tongue (...). Then emotions came, from the dynamics and the power of community. Strangers... we are standing, singing something together (M35).

This is what Ruud (1998) describes as the transpersonal room. In Vist (2009), I claim these experiences to at least transcend the individual, thus also the dichotomy of intra/inter –subjective experiences. This will be further discussed below.

Final summary and discussion

As seen above, interview data on music and emotion can contribute to our understanding of music experience and, as in this case, afford descriptions of a vast variety of experiences, also with relevance to Nielsen's theory. There were no problem finding excerpts exemplifying the different layers in Nielsen's model; hence an acoustic, a structural, a kinetic-motoric, 'bodily', a tensional, an emotional and a 'spiritual', existential layer or facet of music experience seem to also have relevance in the 21st century, at least in a Norwegian context. Furthermore, there is no indication of these layers as only being relevant for classical Western music, although not "every genre" was represented in every layer.

Some empirical and theoretical elements of contribution and further inquiries

Frede Nielsen's model also contributed to the knowledge development, both in what the model did and did not elicit. With regard to what the model elicited *better* than the four perspectives in the preliminary analysis, the existential/spiritual layer is the one that most clearly comes forward. The encounter with Nielsen's layers underscores a spiritual layer of experience, also in this interview material. Moreover, the encounter with Nielsen's model highlights the need for a larger emphasized and *separate* embodied layer, as well as a tensional one. In the preliminary analysis, the body was apparent everywhere, but only explicitly termed in the sub-category of embodiment within the referential perspective. As described in the interviews, the encounter with Nielsen's theory further encourages inquiries into the embodied aspects of music experience. This will also correspond better with the findings on emotion knowledge in the same project, and its use of Johnson's (1990, 2007) theory related to embodiment and Stern's (1985/2000, 2010) theory on vitality affects and vitality forms, affect contours and affect attunement.

However, with the body being so fundamental in our constructions of reality and in our experience (Merleau-Ponty, 1945/2002), could it claim its right to the 'core' or 'deep' position of the model? Changing the spectral metaphor to the facet metaphor affords better opportunities for several connections and core elements. In further inquiries and models of music experience, one may even consider a rhizomatic metaphor (Deleuze & Guattari, 2009) with, e.g. the ginger root as a model of how different individuals and discourses experience music's different layers in a variety of ways. In this more postmodern stance, several elements could be seen as being in

the core/centre, with other elements placed in what could appear as random lines and relations to each other.

Through this analysis, it became clear that the four original perspectives and belonging sub-categories (from the PhD's preliminary analysis on music experience) also tell something that Nielsen's layers do not: The structural and referential perspectives did very well find their layers within the model. Hence, both ends of the traditional philosophical dichotomy (autonomy vs. heteronomy) are well included in the model, as was Nielsen's aim. However, there is additional data material from the interviews revealing constraints in the model, and suggesting additional layers or facets of meaning, especially from the affording and relational perspectives. In agreement with what Nielsen also expressed himself, there are more facets of meaning in music experience than explicitly presented in his model. I also suggest Nielsen's terms and model to more strongly include 'relationalities' and 'intentionalities' toward other human beings and the world in general.

The affording perspective could be seen as being related to such 'intentionalities'. The term 'affordance' (Gibson, 1966) has inspired many music researchers (Aksnes & Ruud, 2008; Clarke, 2005; DeNora, 2002; Ruud, 2010; Stensæth, 2008; Vestad, 2013) to put a focus on the properties of the phenomenon and the specific qualities it can afford us. As Clarke (2005) puts it, the affording perspective confirmed qualities of music, in addition to the invariants of the environment and capacities of the perceiver. Several excerpts above are from the affording perspective. However, although metaphors revealing music's affordances appear in all the layers above, ignoring the affording perspective seems to leave out important contemporary aspects of meanings in music experience. The layers above do not seem to give a sufficient focus on *how* the interview excerpts describe music's experienced intentionality toward the world and other human beings. Is it an agency and performativity in the music experiences involved that are not sufficiently investigated so far? This article does not have room for such an investigation, but as one example there are aspects of knowledge construction (e.g. on identity) afforded by music that are not so well taken care of by Nielsen, and that I will suggest are as much related to a different 'correspondence' perspective than a 'layer' perspective. Investigating the different affordances of energy in the relationship between the object-characteristic and act-characteristic of music experience (that appear in the interviews) may reveal what could be called a quality of agency in music experience caused by musical (performative) actions.

A relational layer

The relational perspective is also not given sufficient room in this article due to Nielsen's presented layers. Nielsen stresses that his model is developed in a Western, European culture and within a classical musical context. In such discourses, the individual's encounter with the artwork has been in focus, and when Nielsen is discussing his music-person or music-consciousness perspective, this person or consciousness seems to be in singular.

Investigating music as a mediating tool for emotion knowledge (with the same interview data), one of the most important findings, was the often-appearing intersubjectivity, which is also related to consciousness (Vist, 2009). For this reason, the most striking constraint of Nielsen's theory is related to intersubjectivity and what constitutes the relational perspective. If asking how the interview excerpts can contribute to a further development of Nielsen's model, a potential layer of intersubjective and relational meanings in music experience becomes the most importunate answer.

An empirical presentation of a relational perspective deserves another full article. However, I would like to briefly elaborate on some theoretical underpinnings. Discussing the audible quadruple, Pio (2015: 36) asks, "so in which ways could Nielsen's theory be supplemented?" Pio describes Nielsen's aesthetic object as "world-less", and he claims (also in Pio & Varkøy, 2012) that Nielsen's existential layer lacks a necessary depth: "*An ontological turn towards the world seems necessary in order to posit the concrete human being in an existentiality*" (Pio, 2015: 36, italics in original). I agree. His ontological turn relates more explicitly to "the way in which we inhabit our world" (ibid.: 31), while the relational layer I suggest more explicitly emphasizes inter-human relations. However, there is no reason to exclude any relations, whether towards musical objects, the world or other human beings. Adding Christopher Small to such a discussion, he may place himself somewhere close to Pio and me in this respect, claiming that music's primary meaning is not individual but social, and that the meaning of musicking lies in relationships. To him, "musicking is in fact a way of knowing our world (...) the experiential world of relationships in all its complexity" (Small, 1998: 50). From the analysis above, and the experienced absence of an explicit focus on intersubjective meanings, it becomes natural to suggest a separate relational layer or facet. Also in need of a more sustainable world, I suggest the ontological turn towards the world must be relational, including relational aesthetics (Bourriaud, 1998/2002) and relational pedagogics (Gergen, 2011).

So where to put it, then, if a relational layer should be introduced to Nielsen's model? Giving room for such discussions will add further details to the inquiry of music experience. Nielsen's argumentation of emotional and existential layers as

elements of qualities adhering to or embodied in the musical object itself, weakens the ‘outer membrane’ of music as a phenomenon in—to me—a very good way: It becomes easier to change or stretch what is meaningful to see as elements *within* the artwork of music. Following Nielsen’s metaphor of an acoustic surface layer of music experience, what would be *outside* the existing globular surface? Could it be the world, as Pio described it, the context as with Ruud, or other human beings that we relate to, as I emphasize?

On the other hand, emotion research is often today seen as social-emotional research (e.g. Denham et al., 2003; Denham, Brown, & Domitrovich, 2010; Webster-Stratton & Reid, 2004). Emotional meaning is grounded in human relations (Saarni, 1999). When introducing the concept of emotional intelligence, even Salovey and Mayer (1990) explained it as “the subset of social intelligence” (ibid.: 189). Hence, I could suggest an emotional and relational layer of meaning, but I prefer a separate relational one. Should it then be in-between the emotional and existential one, or this being ‘another body’, should it be next to the kinetic-motoric ‘bodily’ layer? This is where the faceted model is more helpful than the spectral one (and the rhizome may be an even more convenient metaphor). It can help music educators and others to see the variety of relations between all the layers, and the also ‘still empty facets’ for future discourses to further enrich our potential for, and discussions about music experience.

To illustrate this relational layer, a previously published excerpt by Frida describes a music experience she had in early childhood while attending a ceremony together with her father:

Neither my father nor I knew there was going to be a choir (...). They came up, they had similar coats—that I’d never seen before—and they sang two or three songs, and then I remember thinking: This is how it is in heaven (...). It is such a combined experience, I sat next to my father whom I loved above everything on earth, holding his hand, and then I see this beautiful tableau and these amazing sounds, mmm.

T: What does it recall in you now?

[sounds of sniffle] (M10) (Vist, 2011a)

According to Frida, such early music experiences also colour layers of our music experience later in life. As Stern (1985/2000:138) puts it: “The sharing of affective states is the most pervasive and clinically germane feature of intersubjective relatedness”. Nielsen (1983) claims that limiting the dimensions of music education to the surface layers, and ignoring the deeper more existential layers, will eliminate core reasons for music education per se. This argument increases if one takes into consideration

the importance of relations, and thus also the potential for music education in a relational perspective.

Concluding remarks

Nielsen emphasized the importance of reflection and philosophical foundation in music education. “[M]usikdidaktisk refleksion implicerer et musiksyn” he claims (Nielsen, 1994: 128)—music didactical reflection implies philosophical ideas on music. Without it, discussing content and other more practical tasks in teaching music become meaningless. Hence, discussing meaning in music experience is an important task for music education. Teachers need to be aware of which layers of music experience afford meaning to their students today, and which additional layers they might be able to introduce by tomorrow, thus also how to give music greater value in their student’s lives. When Nielsen’s model was developed, the music educational discourse in the Nordic countries largely favoured classical music. Today, we accept that different genres maybe also afford different meaning to different people. I suggest we also explicitly discuss how to handle this heteronomy in *meanings* in music experience.

In music therapy literature, one can come across formulations which reveal that therapists *organize* their client’s experiences (Bonde, 2009: 24). Are music educators aware of to what extent they are also organizing their student’s experience? According to Nielsen (1994), much music education concentrates on bringing the student in contact with ‘the outer parts of the object’, i.e. music structure and elements. In his opinion, music education must base its legitimization in its relations to human life. Discussing the existential layer, Varkøy and Westby (2014: 185) emphasize the importance of the teacher’s level of reflection and capability of “grasping the differences between the different potential layers of meaning that music offers”. Nevertheless, Richerme points to the still predominantly cognitive focus in music education: “Despite calls for inclusion of the body, emotions, and sociality into music education theory and practice, the complex interplay of these aspects of being remains largely unarticulated and ignored” (Richerme, 2015: 82).

This makes it important for us, while teaching music or researching music experience, to have knowledge of different aesthetic theories and different layers of experience. If we are not aware of the layers of meaning that our own and our students’ music experiences hold, we are not aware of which learning cultures we are participating in, nor what the experience is affording our students. We then may not be aware of what

fields of knowledge and experience we are inhibiting or enhancing. I support Aksnes' and Ruud's claim of music being fundamentally heterogeneous and

(...) an enormously complex network of cognitive processes underlying what we perceive as the *emergent* meaning of this music; a meaning which is also contingent upon our personal life experiences and particular mental and emotional dispositions at any one time. (Aksnes & Ruud, 2008: 54)

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