

# **The Music of Past and Present**

**About the relationship between old and contemporary art music**

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## **Abstract**

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**Title:** The Music of Past and Present: About the Relationship Between Old and Contemporary Art Music

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**The Aim of the Study:** The overall aim of this thesis is to gain an understanding of the current relationship between art music and the society as well as an understanding of the relationship between the old and the contemporary art music. The relationship between the older and the contemporary art music, in which the former holds a predominant position is discussed from several different aspects such as: the historical development of art music, division of taste, relation of music to both modern and postmodern society as well as the influence of educational institutions.

**Conclusion:** Art Music of today seem to operate of the smaller scale and is not fit for the institutions of the industrialism ( the symponic orchestra) in the way that older art music is. It operates on the terms of postmodern and will never be sutible for the institutions of modern, and thus holds a peripheral position in the society.

**Keywords:** Art Music, Division of Taste, Ideology of Authonomy, Cultural Theory, Sociological Theory

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<b>PREFACE</b>	<b>2</b>
<b>AIM</b>	<b>5</b>
<b>THEORETICAL FEATURES</b>	<b>7</b>
<b>METHODOLOGICAL CONSIDERATIONS</b>	<b>10</b>
CULTURAL STUDIES AND THE QUALITATIVE METHOD	10
INTERVIEWS	12
ANALYSIS	14
LIMITATIONS	15
<b>ART MUSIC TROUGH HISTORY</b>	<b>16</b>
<b>BOURDIEU AND THE TASTE DISTINCTION</b>	<b>25</b>
<b>ADORNO, THE ASPECT OF MARKET IN MUSIC</b>	<b>28</b>
<b>LYOTARD AND THE POSTMODERN CONDITION.</b>	<b>34</b>
<b>INTERVIEWS</b>	<b>36</b>
HISTORY AND DEVELOPMENT	36
TASTE	37
ORCHESTRA AS AN INSTITUTION	39
IDEOLOGY OF AUTONOMY	41
<b>DISCUSSION</b>	<b>44</b>
<b>CONCLUSION</b>	<b>49</b>
<b>SOME LAST WORDS</b>	<b>52</b>
<b>BIBLIOGRAPHY</b>	<b>53</b>
<b>APPENDIX</b>	<b>54</b>

## Preface

Thesis that you are about to read could be seen as a mixture of the two of my main interests. One of them is of course sociology, and the other music. My background as a musician but also the student of contemporary musicology gave me an insight in the world of music that is in away unique. A background in a rock band offered an insight in a popular scene and at the same time my classical training offered me an interest and insight in the scene of art music. The mix of the two kinds of music, also gave me a chance to compare the two.

I often had a feeling that rock music seemed to be some sort of public property while classical was not. For example, while everybody discussed rock music in a normal fashion, and could like or dislike it that was not the possible with classical music. Instead discussion often ended very soon or was carried out between people with a formal musical education. This feeling grew stronger when I began studying musicology where the rupture between different kinds of music was firmly rooted in the discipline. Of course it was possible for me to learn both, but not in the same way. The classical music courses offered an insight in the history of the subject as well as formal analysis, and while rock studies contained that as well, they also contained the sociological background for different groups of listener which offered another kind of understanding for the music.

The opportunity of combining music with sociology came once again with cultural studies. Trough studying society and culture I gained an understanding about classical music and its connection to rest of society. This thesis offers a further possibility for an even deeper understanding of the field.

So, at this moment my position is following: I am of course not attempting to solve the general problem of lack of music's, or musicology's connection to the society. In fact I attempt to discuss different question that none the less streams out from the general problem. One of the early musicology lectures I attended was a discussion of behaviour and the way of listening when listening to art music in 18-th and nineteenth century. The professor described the environment as what seemed as a popular music concert, where people were talking while music was played and that the music was contemporary and newly created.

His description really got hold of me as I was thinking of the differences between now and then. I still find the differences fascinating. The repertoire of today still contains the classical peaces that might be hundreds of years old of course a small part of the contemporary works are incorporated in that repertoire. Nowadays we also sit still when the music is playing, trying not to make any disturbing noises. And the most important difference we listen to the same old music, and appreciate the way it is being played, the small nuances of the known classic, and not the new unknown music for the pleasure of hearing something for the first time.

I hope that you agree with my statement that the contemporary classical music seem to be in a periphery, holding a position under that of the giants of the eighteenth and nineteenth century. I hope this doesn't sound harsh as I am trying not to put any different values in different kinds of music, and of course I am not saying that the classical art music isn't worth listening. I am simply looking to the other disciplines of art where the contemporary works seem to be in more common and in a centre, and not in a periphery like that of contemporary art music. In other words no personal evaluation of music should exist in this thesis.

What this thesis is about is in fact a partly answer to the general problem, of lack of music's connection to the society, and a question of why older art music still possesses a predominant position in the society in comparison to the contemporary art music, and not like in the other disciplines a historical and cultural heritage.

In order to answer the posed question I will attempt to discuss a couple of different aspects, for example the historical construction of music, the division of taste and the relation of the music to the modern society and capitalism, the relation of the music to the post-modern society as well as the influence of musical education on the seemingly unchanged relation of music and society. All of those part questions should help me get an answer to the problem posed, and get me further insight in relation of music and society.

It is also valid for me to mention that following my sociological training and the fact that this thesis is cultural studies and not the musicological thesis, I already assume than the music as well as the other art forms are connected to society in more than one way, and that I see them as products of society as well. It is not always clear that every body will agree on this position.

I hope that even if my thesis is a small work it will light a spark of interest that is necessary in order to wake this topic to life again, it was such a long time since the last time. I also hope that you as a reader will find this problem interesting and worth thinking and reading about.

## Aim

The goal of this thesis is to gain an understanding of the current relationship of music and society as well as trying to give some answers to the question of why older art music still holds a predominant position in our musical life in comparison to contemporary art music. One might for example, compare music with other fields of art where relationship between old and contemporary is quite different, and where the historical works still find their place without getting in way of the contemporary ones.

In order to try answering the outlined issue of this study I will concentrate on several of underlying questions including; historic development, discussion of taste, a relationship of music and society as well as different outlooks on music in the modern and the post-modern society. I will also look at the role of the ideology of autonomy in education and the influence of education and educational institutions on preserving the current situation.

In the discussion on historic development different factors that helped develop the ideology of autonomy in music will be considered. First and foremost the freedom of the musician, and change of his status from a servant to an artist, the notion of genius and its influence on the current conception of art music, the composers and the sociological question of the ruling class actively developing the music in order to create distinction from the middle and working class.

The second chapter will concentrate on the discussion of the division of taste and further explain the strategies used to further this distinction.

The relation between the modern society and music will be discussed mainly through describing music's relationship to the market and the industrialism of modern society. A discussion of post-modernity will help gain an understanding for the contemporary music in modern as well as post-modern terms.

Finally the ideology of the contemporary art music will also be discussed as well as its influence on educational institutions and through them the influence on musical life as a whole.



I will also throughout the interviews try to gain a deeper understanding of the common perception of the posed relationship (music and society) and compare the results to the theoretical norm, in order to create a more detailed picture of the situation.

## Theoretical features

When researching the literature for this study I was bemused at how few works actually discuss society and art music and was forced to expand my search into the sociological works on art in general and not specifically on music, thus the literature used in the thesis is following:

Arnold Hauser discusses the social and artistic development through history. Hauser starts at the beginning with Stone Age art that gradually develops through history and society, taking on different statuses and shapes. Although he mostly concentrates on the art and architecture a small discussion on music through seventeenth and eighteenth century was relevant.<sup>1</sup>

Norbert Elias discusses the change of composer's position in society through a micro sociological study of W.A. Mozart's life and various transformations of his status, from servant to artist, to after his death the genius. Elias gives a pretty dark picture of a society in change and a talented individual caught in an unfortunate time of struggle, and recognition after death.<sup>2</sup>

Tia DeNora's "*Beethoven and the construction of genius...*" discusses almost the same period but from a different perspective. Influenced by Bourdieu's taste distinction strategies, she tries to map out these in Vienna in 18<sup>th</sup> century, as well as show that Beethoven's success did not solely depend on his talent but the fortune of his connections and contact with people in very strong positions with a burning interest for music and an interest creation of distinct taste for the aristocrat.<sup>3</sup>

Pierre Bourdieu's "*Distinction*" is an elaborate critique on Immanuel Kant's. "Critique of judgement" where Bourdieu establishes a theoretic frame for mapping and explaining strategies used for the distinction by different classes. Bourdieu discusses art music as well as the different ways of listening in order to explain the differentiation between the taste of necessity and taste of liberty and the employment of different strategies in order to mark this distinction.<sup>4</sup>

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<sup>1</sup> Arnold Hauser, *The Social History of Art* (London 1999)

<sup>2</sup> Norbert Elias, Michael Schröter ed. *Mozart: a portrait of a genius* (Cambridge 1993)

<sup>3</sup> Tia DeNora, *Beethoven and a Construction of Genius: Musical Politics in Vienna 1792-1803* (Berkeley 1995)

<sup>4</sup> Bourdieu, Pierre: *Distinction: A Social Critique of the Judgement of Taste* (London 1984)

Theodore Adorno discusses the relationship of music to society and evolves a complicated dialectic relationship between music and society. His Marxist outlook gives him the framework for mapping a detailed relationship between the music and the market as well as helping him to predict the further direction of music. Adorno's work is one of the most elaborated and insightful works on sociology of music ever written and has had a great influence on the discipline. However the work was created in the early second half of twentieth century, and even if it is still useful it seems to have become outdated and a need for the more current work of such a calibre is obvious.<sup>5</sup>

*"Music and society"* is written and edited as a critique on musicology as a scientific discipline for its lack of the connection of music to society. However the authors have different opinions on the solution of this problem and only a few of them are sociologically oriented. Wolf's and Subotnik's texts will be used in this study for their critique of musicology from a sociological standpoint in relation to education as well as qualitative research.<sup>6</sup>

Finally the post modern discussion of the society and knowledge as well as critique on the modern conception of taste can be found in F. Lyotard's work. This detailed discussion on the post-modern society and the way it functions as well as the differences between the modern and post modern way of creating and sustaining knowledge, gives a picture of a profoundly different society. This picture of post-modern society gives a useful ground that can be used as an explanation for the musical situation as well.<sup>7</sup>

The literature above will be used for this study as all the works contribute in different but relevant ways. As previously mentioned, some of the studies are of a purely sociological nature. If they were to be put aside there would be very few works left in the discussion of art music and society. On the side of popular music the situation is different since the research on popular culture perfuse. The Birmingham School alone has, over the last couple of decades produced a vast number of influential studies.

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<sup>5</sup> Theodor W. Adorno, *Introduction to the Sociology of Music* (New York 1989)

<sup>6</sup> Richard Leppert and Susan McClary Eds. *Music and Society: The Politics of Composition Performance and Reception* (Cambridge 1987)

<sup>7</sup> Jean- Francois Lyotard, *The Postmodern Condition: A Report on Knowledge* (Minneapolis 1993)

However on the side of art music one of the most influential studies is still the work of Adorno, even if it is considered by many to be somewhat outdated, there is little else to use. I sincerely hope that interest in this subject will grow, and that new important studies are on their way.

# Methodological considerations

## Cultural studies and the qualitative method

In the “*Researching culture; qualitative method and cultural studies*”<sup>8</sup> Alasuutari tries to define the discipline of cultural studies from a number of different standpoints. Amongst others he discusses the history of the development in the cultural studies sphere, where he mentions a shift of focus from the serious cultural work to the examination of everyday life and everyday entertainment, implied with the Richard Hoggart’s “*The uses of literacy*”.<sup>9</sup> This shift of focus helped to widen the concept of culture into other spheres than that of the high art. It also helped development of the “critical stance towards the hierarchic definition of culture or a ‘profane’ stance towards art and high culture.”<sup>10</sup>

I would however, like to argue that the critical stance towards the hierarchic culture, at least in the sphere of music, does not seem to have led to any further research within high culture than the initial work of the Birmingham school. While I am aware of the major accomplishments of the Birmingham school, especially in the field of music (for example that of Jefferson and Hall) they always seem to treat the subcultures of the popular youth culture with an especially sharp examining lens. The same lens does not seem to be applied when researching high culture in the musical sphere even besides that critical stance towards hierarchic culture.

My personal belief is that the critical outlook towards high culture, or as Alasuutari puts it a “profane stance” towards high art music is essential in solving the problem of this thesis, as well as the sole reason for the existence of the thesis.

On another level this stance also meant questioning my previous knowledge as well as implying a critique towards a certain part of the discipline of musicology while treating a problem that could also be considered as a musicological subject. But as Alasuutari points out:

“Similarly it can be argued that the corners of sociology, anthropology and literary criticism have been cut off or melted away to form or give space to it. The fact that cultural studies is often and for good reason, said to be cross disciplinary and even anti-disciplinary fits the picture. Disciplines are seldom, if ever carved out of one wood. In the humanities and social sciences

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<sup>8</sup> Pertti Alasuutari, *Researching Culture: Qualitative Method and Cultural Studies* (London 1995)

<sup>9</sup> Richard Hoggart, in Pertti Alasuutari, *Researching culture: Qualitative Method and Cultural Studies* (London 1995)

<sup>10</sup> Alasuutari, p. 26

disciplines are typically formed around a problematic phenomenon thought to be worthy of serious consideration.”<sup>11</sup>

This blend of different disciplines as well as the analytic perspective of the cultural studies calls for the blend of methods borrowed from humanities with those of social sciences. It is precisely this combination of qualitative methods with the social sciences problematization that Alasuutari sees as cultural studies.

This thesis follows the qualitative research method of cultural studies in using the theoretical body of the sociological research of culture whilst also drawing from individual aspects of the interviews. This is due to the aim being to get to the root of the current situation within the field of art music. According to Berg it is precisely the aim of research that sets apart the qualitative from the quantitative method:

“In his attempt to differentiate between quantitative and qualitative approaches Dabbs (1982:32) indicates the notion of quality is essential to the nature of things. On the other hand quantity is elementally an amount of something. Quality refers to what, how, when and where of a thing- its essence and ambience. Qualitative research thus refers to the meanings, concepts, definitions, characteristics, metaphors, symbols and descriptions of things. In contrast, Quantitative research refers to counts and measures of things.”<sup>12</sup>

The qualitative method also calls for further considerations. According to McCracken the qualitative approach does not offer an understanding for the large part of the world but instead a deeper examination of culture or as he puts it “an opportunity to glimpse the complicated character, organisation, and logic of culture.”<sup>13</sup>

The selection of the respondents is thus made accordingly. While the quantitative approach requires a large amount of respondents in order to generalise through surveys with predicated questions, the qualitative approach calls for a small amount of informants and usage of in depth interviews.<sup>14</sup>

For this thesis the four informants have been chosen, and in depth interviews are conducted since my goal is not to understand the wit of the phenomenon I study but the nature and the logic of the situation itself.

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<sup>11</sup> Ibid. p. 24

<sup>12</sup> Dabbs i Bruce L Berg, *Qualitative Research Methods for the Social Sciences* (Boston 1989) pp. 2-3

<sup>13</sup> Grant McCracken, *The Long Interview*, *Qualitative Research Methods* no. 13, A SAGE University Paper p. 17

<sup>14</sup> Ibid. p. 17

## Interviews

My interview process started with me composing a small relatively loose interview guide that contained the major themes for the discussion. The aim was to use a semi- structured interview where I could easily keep track of the themes while still having room for further discussion. According to McCracken the questionnaire has several functions but its overall function is to protect the larger structure and hold the attention of the interviewer during the course of the interview.<sup>15</sup> When transcribed my interviews had similar structure in order of the themes discussed although their answers were different. The questionnaire also offered a less chaotic pile of data which was then easier for me to review.

The four informants that have been chosen for the interviews all have an occupation within the field of music. However they are occupied with quite different things within the field as two are composers, one a university professor, and a last one an artistic leader of a symphonic orchestra. They all live within the Malmo- Lund region and are part of the same musical scene, but their different occupations give a deeper understanding of the problem.

Their age and position within the field varies as one of the informants is my age while others are middle-aged men. The young informant is just starting his career while the other ones are on the top of their careers sitting on powerful positions.

My choice of the expert informants limited my scope of potential interviewees. The result was that all informants are men in the different ages. That is not to say that there are no women in this position, but only that they haven't been so easy to find. The fact that all of my informants turned out to be male seems to reinforce the core problem of this thesis, where since older art music is seen to be gift of god to a few genius composers we can not question their gender or for that matter the today's canon within the realm of the art music. This problem seemed not to be recognized by the informants since they seemed to state that it was not a problem within the music world but more of a general problem in the society.<sup>16</sup>

I am also aware that in choosing expert informants I did not consider the people within the organizations with less power nor the audience. I was interested in understanding the reasons

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<sup>15</sup> McCracken, *The Long Interview*, pp. 24-25

<sup>16</sup> See the interview chapter

for the current situation from the point of people that have the means and position to both question and change that situation.

Steinar Kvale states that the relationship between the interview and the informant is far from equal as the interviewer controls the situation with the choice of questions asked.<sup>17</sup> Also Berg sees the interview situation as unnatural conversation and urges the interviewer to stay in control of the interview.<sup>18</sup> However in this thesis the relationship was uneven in other aspects as well. In the conducted interviews this relationship has however been altered since the informants are the experts of the field in question, and as mentioned, some hold very important powerful positions.

My former education has helped had a great deal in conducting the interviews since the language and terms used by the informants did not have to be questioned during the interviews. The informants often used standard terminology of professionals which had it been questioned in order to be explained would have disturbed the continuity of the conversations.

There is however another aspect of informants as experts holding important positions, namely that of power. This is what Becker defines as the hierarchy of creditability. According to Becker we often let the highest group in an organisation define the problem for us and we don't take in to account things that they see as unimportant, thus leaving out important aspects of the phenomena. Becker's best trick for dealing with the problem seems to be questioning everything anyone in powerful position might tell you.<sup>19</sup> The interview questionnaire used in the interviews has to some extent been useful in not letting the informants in powerful position define the aspects of research phenomena for me and asking them questions they sometimes considered unnecessary.

My interviews differed in time range; some were shorter than the others. However this difference in time did not affect the qualitative aspect of data gained, and was merely quantitative. The names of my informants have been changed in order to preserve their anonymity.

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<sup>17</sup> Steinar Kvale, *Den kvalitative forskningsintervju* (Lund, 1997) pp. 118-119

<sup>18</sup> Berg, pp. 27, 37

<sup>19</sup> Howard Becker, *Tricks of the Trade: How to Think About Your Research While You're Doing It* (Chicago, 1998) pp.90-91



## Analysis

There was of course a certain amount of risk when it comes to my analysis, which had to do with my background. I had to consider the music education I had in order not to take anything for granted and see the phenomena from a position of researcher outside the field of music. This might have led to some important details being overseen as they were natural part of the content for me. I tried however to explain and detect a many such details as possible in order to create a thesis that is widely understandable.

Further more, the afore mentioned hierarchy of creditability also made an obstacle, since I had to question my findings and look for further meanings that were not obvious in informant's answers. At the same time the qualitative analysis requires paying attention to the informants own stories in order to try to create and understand the meaning behind their actions. This is of course not the same as interpreting the actions according to my own experience and knowledge.

Becker states that the misinterpretation of the people's feelings and experiences is fairly common in some parts of research and especially that of deviant behaviour and that we tend to imply our personal interpretation to actions of people that are outside our realm of experience. The solution is to get as near as possible to their conditions in order to most accurately understand and interpret the meaning. It is also of importance that we make sense of what the informants are telling us. According to Becker the ununderstandable action is not to be misinterpreted but that the researcher should always have in mind that actions are perfectly understandable to the people we study, even thou we may not perceive them as such. The researcher shall then, during the course of research, try to see a glimpse of the world of the subject through the subject's eyes instead of through his/her own. That is of course only possible to a certain degree as the researcher is always influenced by his or her own perspective.<sup>20</sup>

I have in this thesis as far as possible tried to be aware of this in order to minimise this kind of error. However I can still not be totally certain that I did not imply my own meanings in the results of the interviews. I can only detect this to a certain degree; the rest is up to the reader.

Alasuutari sees the qualitative material as the specimen of a certain culture under study. The researcher gathers a certain amount of clues, through observations that he/she than has to

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<sup>20</sup> Ibid. pp. 14 -15,

unravel. That is however not to say that the analysis can progress in any way possible but that the clues should always be cross-referenced with the literature used in the research in order to show that interpretation works in organizing data.<sup>21</sup>

## **Limitations**

As I mentioned before, the choice of the expert informants limited my scope of potential interviewees. The interviewees turned out to be all male which results in a quiet one sided picture of the situation. The choice of the experts for the interviews also meant not taking into account the aspect of people on less powerful positions nor the audience. One can argue that this choice can lead to a narrow and one sided perspective. However I must also admit that the limitations regarding the choice of interviewees even thou they limit the scope still provide a glimpse of the situation which is the aim of this thesis and also in consistence with the method used.

One other limitation is that I have not fully researched to what extent the older art music is favoured to the new art music. However I have looked at the earlier program research, in order check if my statement could be validated. The research of the symphonic orchestra programs and the frequency of the certain kind of music played would have been a project that required quantitative methodology. It has also been to answer to the question of “how many?” instead of "why?" which is the main purpose of this thesis.

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<sup>21</sup> Alasuutari, pp. 21, 45

## Art music through history

The position of modern art music today can be traced in number of different historical processes. A short insight in the development of music through history can be helpful in creating a better understanding of different social processes that actively operate at the background of our culture. The creation of the composer as the artist and not servant, later on as the genius,<sup>22</sup> as well as politics of music through the enlightenment period that contributed to the division of the music in two different categories, directly contribute to our view of art music today.<sup>23</sup>

Arnold Hauser discusses the interaction of social and artistic development through the history of the civilisation in his *“The Social History of Art”*. He begins with writing about prehistoric art, and interpreting it as instrument in magical technique, used as help for success in hunting and attaining of different objects.<sup>24</sup> He describes the difference between art in the old and new stone age in a following manner:” The most fundamental difference, between this art and naturalism is that it represents reality not as a continuous picture of complete homogeneity, but as confrontation of two worlds.”<sup>25</sup>

In similar ways Hauser also interprets the relationship between art and society in ancient Egypt, Mesopotamia, and Crete as well as in ancient Greece and Rome, where he examines mostly art but also literature. Hauser sees a vital relation between art and social development and is able to connect every development in art to a certain change in society. He points out the organisation and division of labour, beginnings of professional differentiation, as well as the development of idol worshipping and religion.<sup>26</sup> In highly developed ancient societies, like Egypt and Greece, the religious dominance becomes evident in production and representation of art with its main and often only purpose to serve religion, as well as to immortalise the ruling class. The ruling class is actively maintaining the status quo by preserving the traditional art for as long as possible.

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<sup>22</sup> Elias, *Mozart*

<sup>23</sup> DeNora, *Beethoven*

<sup>24</sup> Hauser, p.26

<sup>25</sup> Hauser, p. 34

<sup>26</sup> Ibid. pp. 30-31

Hauser further describes the art of middle ages, renaissance and baroque in relation to the development of the modern capitalist society. Society is thus described in terms of power struggle, economic change towards the feudal society, religious dominance, and control by priesthood and aristocracy over society and art.<sup>27</sup> He also sees the emergence of middle class and its use of art as a means of struggle for power which climaxes with the French revolution resulting in its gaining of power and ultimately to it becoming the main supporter of the arts. The style in literature painting and music all express the dissolution of feudal society and beginning of modern capitalism.

Also here Hauser detects a power struggle between the aristocrats and the bourgeois and its influence on the art. The reflection of current political and economic situation can, according to Hauser, be seen in the purpose and the aesthetic ideal of art, as well as in the criteria by which artworks are being valued, social status of the artist etc. He clearly shows how different art styles of a certain period respond to the situation in the society of that same period.

Although Hauser mostly concentrates on painting and literature the small passage he devotes to music is still quite useful. His discussion about music begins with the enlightenment era or pre-romantics as he calls it. The big change in society that is occurring in that period seems to be clearly evident in music.

“The acute conflict between Johann Sebastian Bach and his immediate successors, above all the irreverent way in which the younger generation made fun of his out-of-date fugal form, reflects not only the change from the lofty and conventional style of the late baroque to the intimate and simple style of the pre-romantics, but also the transition from a still fundamentally medieval method of juxtaposition, which the rest of the arts had already overcome in the Renaissance, to an emotionally homogeneous, concentrated, dramatically developed form.[...] This tendency towards dramatisation was the real distinction between the new self-contained forms of the Lied and the sonata and the old sequential forms of the fugue, the passacaglia, the chaconne and the other forms based on imitation and variation.”<sup>28</sup>

This change does not only occur in musical composition but is evident in the new musical life too. While music was written for a special purpose in the late baroque era it now enters the concert arena through the musical society “*collegia musica*”. This leads to a new concert audience and the invention of concert music. Composers’ social status now improves, as well as the value of their works. The creation of the concert audience makes the music attainable to

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<sup>27</sup> Ibid.

<sup>28</sup> Ibid. pp. 573-574

the middle class which later on becomes the main consumer of the art form. It also leads to differentiation of composer and musician as well as differentiation of virtuous from the amateur musician. In Hauser's words the separation of art and craft now takes place in music.<sup>29</sup>

The change in social position of music takes place throughout the enlightenment period in which Haydn, Mozart and Beethoven were active. The change itself can be traced in different conditions under which those composers lived and worked.

Norbert Elias explores the social position W.A. Mozart in changing society from the perspective of social psychology in "*Mozart: portrait of a genius*"<sup>30</sup> He describes the situation in the same manner as Hauser, positions Mozart not in one certain period but under the transition period between two, as he describes it static term, epochs.<sup>31</sup>

Like Hauser, Elias examines the structure in the class conflict but also the more detailed aspects in Mozart's life. He also points out the importance of not only interpreting art in terms of socio-economic "clichés" like feudalism, capitalism but in terms of combination of both economic and musical processes in order to better understand the people and their creation as well as economic development of the time. Elias sees Mozart's life and death as an expression of power struggle between the aristocracy and the bourgeoisie. He is more concerned with the micro sociology and investigates relationships like that of Mozart's and his father Leopold. He describes the older Mozart as court musician of the older generation, belonging to the old system of music servants, a dominant, controlling father with a clear goal for his son.

"However his revolt was clearly linked indissolubly with another, his revolt against his father. Leopold Mozart had trained his son for a career as a musician in court society. We must keep in mind how closely, looked at sociologically, his behaviour was linked to the old craftsman tradition. Within this framework it was commonplace for a father to take roll of the master instructing his son in the craft skills, perhaps even hoping that his son would one day surpass his own mastery. [...] Leopold Mozart was still fairly firmly rooted in this tradition. He brought up his son in line with this canon. A social position as a court musician was a part of it."<sup>32</sup>

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<sup>29</sup> Ibid. pp. 574-577

<sup>30</sup> Elias, *Mozart*

<sup>31</sup> Ibid. p. 10

<sup>32</sup> Ibid. p. 22

W. A. Mozart was not as willing as his father to conform to the old hierarchic system and become a court musician. He seemed to have an ambivalent attitude against the aristocracy.

“But nothing reliable can be said about this unless one investigates how Mozart saw himself in relation to the ruling class of his time. His situation was a very peculiar one. Although he was the socially dependent subordinate of court aristocrats, his awareness of his extraordinary musical talent made him feel equal, if not superior to them. [---] Mozart experienced the fundamental ambivalence of the bourgeois artist in court society, which can be summed up by the following dichotomy: identification with the court nobility and its taste; resentment of his humiliation by it.”<sup>33</sup>

Elias also sees Mozart as a rebel who revolted both against his father, the aristocracy and indirectly against the power structure of the 18<sup>th</sup> century in number of different ways. He challenged the notion of the artist by wanting to become a free artist in a time when music market did not exist. He quit his job at the court of Salzburg in hope to offer his services elsewhere. But this breaking of the norm-system is also evident in his music as well as in the reception of it. When in Salzburg, Mozart creates works that are ordered and written for special occasions, but even in Vienna he was aware that he had to compromise and not writes in an exact personal manner. Music in Mozart’s time did not exist in order to appeal to personal feelings. Its function was to entertain during dances, theatre as well as in courts, and uniformity in style was preferred to originality. Breaking the norms and gaining more freedom could lead to an even bigger failure in the 18<sup>th</sup> century, than today. Mozart’s increasingly personal work did eventually break those norms which led to the misconception of his talent and later on to his defeat.<sup>34</sup>

Conception of the music and art changed only a generation later and led to Beethoven enjoying the success of a unique free artist as well the status of genius that didn’t exist before him in music. The genius status of artists in our time dates back to time of the enlightenment and romantic period but exists even today in a slightly different manner. Elias describes this perception of genius in terms of a civilisation conflict. He states that there is a need for genius in order for us to master our animal side. We tend to stress the qualities of greatness in people in order to minimise despise for the ordinary and less valuable qualities in them.<sup>35</sup>

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<sup>33</sup> Ibid. p. 19

<sup>34</sup> Ibid. p. 28-41

<sup>35</sup> Ibid. p. 51-52

Music sociologist Tia De Nora discusses the invention of genius in slightly different terms. Her book “*Beethoven and the construction of genius: Musical politics in Vienna, 1792-1803*” treats Beethoven and his success in terms of conflict between different interests. She sees the status of the composer as actively constructed by a small circle of aristocrats in power as well as by Beethoven him self. She compares Beethoven with his contemporaries in music and states that his surrounding as well as the situation he found him self in from the early years helped him to achieve the status of the greatest composer of all times.<sup>36</sup>

DeNora is examining a number of different factors involved in construction of Beethoven as a genius. This is not to say that Beethoven’s music did not have any quality and intrinsic value which contributed to the composers’ recognition. Rather it was an interaction of different factors that led to the current status of the composer. The factors contributing are the construction of canon, the power struggle in the Viennese society of the time, the emergence of high art and the new aesthetics, the new social organisation of musical life and the creation of genius concept.<sup>37</sup>

Like both Hauser and Elias, DeNora describes criteria surrounding music as dependent on the social context of the time and although all of the above acknowledge the talent of composers of the time none of them sees their talent as the sole determining factor contributing to their success rather they see underlying social structures as the main contributing factor. There is however one main difference between DeNora’s and Hauser’s view of the social conditions leading to the change in the musical life.

Although DeNora acknowledges the fall of the aristocrats as the ruling class and the increasing rule of the middle class, she perceives this change as gradual. She also perceives the aristocrats as actively, although maybe not consciously working for the goal of remaining in power. The idea of the economically impoverished aristocracy that led to emancipation of the musician and therefore the production of serious and complex works does not seem like the adequate enough explanation. In fact she states that the middle class control of the musical life happened much later, as in the middle of 19th century. She also states that the aristocratic

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<sup>36</sup> De Nora, *Beethoven*

<sup>37</sup> Ibid.

economical demise did not occur until much later.<sup>38</sup> The change that occurred mostly depended on the new organisation of the musical life, which happened due to active aristocratic maintaining of cultural authority.

DeNora also mentions a couple of Beethoven's closest patrons as ones that were most active in creation of serious music. She is also aware of Beethoven's social resources, the advantage he had being the son of Kapellmeister in Bonn. This helped him get in contact with most of high and powerful patrons first in Bonn and later also in Vienna. Although this wasn't the determining factor later on in his career DeNora sees it as an important contribution to his success.<sup>39</sup>

The rising prosperity of the middle-class and the second noble society enabled the privileges that were previously enjoyed by the high aristocrats only. Lots of the new aristocrats could afford at least a small band, every middle class family could go to concerts at least couple times per year. According to DeNora, those new conditions lead to a decreasing interest in the *hauskapellen* by the aristocracy as it didn't provide the cultural distinction of the former times. The form of the patronage changed in order to preserve the aristocratic identity as the leaders of cultural life. In preserving the position aristocratic patrons now turned to the concern for serious, not so light-hearted and conventional music.<sup>40</sup>

De Nora states that this actively maintained distinction was in fact one of the contributing factors in the emergence of serious music. The new aesthetics meant that the criteria for evaluation of music changed. Music was not to be regarded as the pleasing entertainment anymore. In stead the aristocrats organised private concerts and music societies for the love of serious and, harder to grasp, music.<sup>41</sup> Hauser has as a similar explanation to the division of music into serious and light. But according to him this was a process was evident later in the romantic period in the formal traits of music.<sup>42</sup>

“Romanticism is the culmination of the development which began in the second half of eighteenth century: music becomes the exclusive property of the middle class. Not only the orchestras move from the banqueting halls of the castles and palaces into the concert-halls filled by the middle class, but chamber music also finds home, not in aristocratic salons but in

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<sup>38</sup> Ibid. p. 43-49

<sup>39</sup> Ibid.

<sup>40</sup> Ibid. p. 43

<sup>41</sup> Ibid.

<sup>42</sup> Hauser, p. 711



bourgeois drawing rooms. The broader masses, who take a growing interest in musical entertainments, demand however a lighter more ingratiating, less complicated music. This demand in itself promotes the creation of shorter, more entertaining, more varied forms, but leads, at the same time, to a division of musical output into serious and light music.”<sup>43</sup>

The processes of social change that began during the enlightenment period continue to develop during the romantic period. The most important underlying change is the beginning of modern capitalism, and its influence on status of the artist as well as on the art it self. The change of power relations, in favour of middle class also had a large impact on art, or more precisely the division of music into serious and light.

Conception of art changed dramatically after the revolution according to Hauser. Expression along with individuality becomes one of the main traits of art in the time after the revolution. Rationality and uniformity are no longer desirable qualities. The artist does not feel the need to meet the demands of the public any more. “Art ceases to be a social activity guided by objective and conventional criteria, and becomes an activity of self-expression creating its own standard; it becomes, in a word, the medium through which the single individual speaks to single individuals.”<sup>44</sup> Elias also states that one of the important characteristic of art is the fact that artists now have lot more space for individual creation, and experimentation. The artwork according to him is now based on one person’s reflection.<sup>45</sup>

As the artists gain more freedom the art and the formal aspects of it become increasingly original. In music composers are not following the principles of former times. The works are now smaller than and not as uniform as the sonata form of classicism. The composers are now using the forms like Etudes, Fantasies and Impromptus, as well as many other forms. This leads to an overall more complex and difficult composition. Amateurs can no longer play music peaces as they require professional experts. The polarisation towards the virtuoso musician is clear in the romantic period. According to Hauser this composing for the virtuoso had two functions of which one is to restrict the practise of music to professionals and the other one to delude the amateur.<sup>46</sup>

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<sup>43</sup> Ibid. p. 711

<sup>44</sup> Ibid p. 644

<sup>45</sup> Elias, p. 47

<sup>46</sup> Hauser, p. 712

The disintegration of form is in part also achieved by the increasingly individual, differentiated style, based on sublimation of feelings and thoughts.<sup>47</sup> This increased individuality not only has influence on the artist but on the whole culture. Even the spectators are individualised as the artwork now turns to individual emotions instead of the group.<sup>48</sup> This leads to conclusion that individual culture had become the leading cultural form during the romantic period.<sup>49</sup>

According to Hauser this eventually led to an even further detachment of cultural elite. The cultural elite of the time felt cut off from the middle class who later led to their detachment and forming of the new social group “intelligentsia”. Forming of intelligentsia is to Hauser a final sign of a process of emancipation of the cultural sphere from the ruling class. That in turn is a sign of further specialisation in the society which is a part of a more universal process of Industrialisation. The intelligentsia holds slightly different system of norms than the bourgeoisie, which in turn leads to the total estrangement of it in comparison to the ruling class.<sup>50</sup>

The romantic period ended around the world war one, but it was not until the crisis of 1929 that people experienced the change. The crisis of economy echoed in the crisis of bourgeois life and the authoritarian alternatives start to emerge, and the intelligentsia divides in two camps. Later on this leads to the democratisation of masses. Art on the other hand is not following the social change and is still highly professionalized and closed for the masses.

“Debussy already plays off coldness of tone and a pure harmonic structure against the sentimentality of German romanticism, and this anti-romanticism is intensified in Stravinsky, Schoenberg and Hindemith into an anti-*espressivo*, which forswears all connection with the music of the sensitive nineteenth century. The intention is to write, paint and compose, from the intellect, not from the emotions;”<sup>51</sup>

The new anti-impressionistic style emerges in order to break the already conventional modes of expression, and fights for the directness of it. The art is now turned to away from feelings and is made for the intellect, and the sensual aesthetics are laid behind. It estranges itself

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<sup>47</sup> Ibid. p. 712

<sup>48</sup> Elias, p. 48

<sup>49</sup> Hauser, p. 737

<sup>50</sup> Ibid. pp. 838-839

<sup>51</sup> Ibid. p. 931

further from the masses in terms of increasingly difficult communication, and becomes highly unpopular.<sup>52</sup> Instead the new popular culture emerges.

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<sup>52</sup> Ibid. p. 951

## Bourdieu and the taste distinction

The next part of the thesis is treating a number of different theoretic approaches of use for the thesis as well as the chapter with the interviews where different aspects of the discussion are treated. The first theoretic approach is that of Pierre Bourdieu where he discusses the subject of division by taste.

Through a distinctive set of theories Bourdieu elaborated an extensive critique on I. Kant's "*Critique on judgement*". With specific set of methods, (he uses statistical analysis and surveys) Bourdieu examines, cultural practices as a product of varying factors in society such as capital, and habitus as well as modes of acquiring them namely through education and social position. He defines the practice as an interaction between habitus and forms of capital on different social spaces or as following: "[habitus + capital] + field = practice."<sup>53</sup>

With help of those key terms Bourdieu tries to establish a theory on both micro, and macro level as well as to establish a relation between structure and agent. Habitus is a term defined, by Bourdieu in a number of different ways. It is used to describe the ways, or underlying principles by which we internalize and dispose of different meanings, and at the same time the system by which we classify. It is relation between those two capacities which defines the term. Habitus is universal, and lies in the necessities that are inherent in learning conditions, and at the same time produced by those. Or as he puts it:

"The habitus is not only a structuring structure, which organizes practices and than perception of practices, but also structured structure, which organizing. The principle of division into logical classes which organizes the perception of the social world itself the product of internalization of the division into social classes."<sup>54</sup>

The term capital refers to a social relation, a system of properties that exists and operates within a field. Bourdieu divides between three forms of capital, social, economic and cultural capital, which are acquired through different modes of accumulation, such as education, or/ and through social origin. He states that different kinds of capital are not simultaneously operative, because of different logic of each field in which they operate. He also divides capital into initial and accumulated capital that operate and inherent different meanings in different fractions of the class.

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<sup>53</sup> Pierre Bourdieu, *Distinction: A Social Critique of the Judgement of Taste*, (London, 1984) p. 101

<sup>54</sup> *ibid.* p. 170

Capital is one of the components inherent in formation of classes which Bourdieu perceives as constructed by an interaction of different characteristics. He states that even if the predominant component of the determining the class seems occupational, we still take into account the secondary properties although in an unconscious way. Class is thus determined by the relation of all the different sets of properties, of which the most important is the volume and accumulation of all the different sorts of capital in relation to other additional factors such as age, sex and others.<sup>55</sup>

According to Bourdieu the cognitive structures of division are social embodied and internalized as a form of practical knowledge that implements historical and classificatory schemes of appropriation. These structures are a product of objective division into classes and function below the level of consciousness. They make possible the production of common and meaningful world. Division into classes is often made visible by appropriation of taste, a strategy that marks the distinction in preference, according to social origin as well as education.

“Whereas, the ideology of charisma regards taste in legitimate culture as a gift of nature, scientific observation shows that cultural needs are the products of upbringing and education: surveys establish that all cultural practices (museum visits, concert-going, reading etc.) and preferences in literature painting and music, are closely linked to educational level (measured by qualifications or length of schooling) and secondarily to social origin.”<sup>56</sup>

The influence of origin and education vary according to the different cultural practices, and to what extent they are recognized by the society and the overall usage of taste can be traced in all areas of culture. Thus taste, according to Bourdieu, is used as a strategy for marking the difference in class belonging, it marks the distinction in preferences according to social origin, as well as education. A work of art, for example, has a meaning only for those, who possess competence for understanding it. The pleasure of understanding an art work comes not only from sensible properties, and is increased with larger understanding and appreciation of the specific genre of historic period and so appreciation of the art does not come naturally but is in fact demanding a preconceived knowledge.<sup>57</sup>

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<sup>55</sup> *ibid.* pp. 106-114

<sup>56</sup> *Ibid.* p. 1

<sup>57</sup> *ibid.* pp. 1-6

Bourdieu discusses the possession of art as well in connection to division through taste. Here he refers to Marx and his conception of man as “an initially posited as a private property owner,” the man that preserves his personality and distinctiveness by way of exclusive ownership. Owning of an object with a symbolic significance, such as a painting, distinguish the possessor’s status as the owner against all of those who are not owners.<sup>58</sup> The quality of person is measured by appropriation of the object and the quality of object appropriated. Thus Bourdieu sees the appropriation of art as one of the most classifying practices in marking of division, because of the possibility of numerous way of distinction into styles, genres, periods.

Trough his surveys Bourdieu gradually tracks an underlying principle of taste that in one case sets function over form and in the other the opposite. The opposition of quantity and quality, substance and form, natural and cultural corresponds to the opposition between the taste of necessity which prefers function over form and taste of liberty which prefers form over function.<sup>59</sup>

This opposition is, according to Bourdieu, further following the aesthetic and Kant’s principle of pure taste which differs between the ‘pleasure of senses’ and ‘pleasure of reflection’, in which the latter implies the level of sublimation and represents the moral excellence. It refuses the taste of senses, the facile, easy and immediate sensation which represents, the bodily, animal pleasure and submission to pure aesthesis. In short it refuses nature in preference for culture and is rooted in opposition between the cultivated bourgeois and the people, opposition which, according to Bourdieu, leads to a sacred culture and has a function of legitimating social differences. This leads Bourdieu to the critique of Immanuel Kant’s work on aesthetics, *Critique of judgment*, where, he states, Kant does not in fact do anything more than poses a universal value of what is in fact the standpoint of bourgeois intelligentsia, and fails to see its own creation of universalism and ethnocentrism.<sup>60</sup>

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<sup>58</sup> Ibid. p. 280

<sup>59</sup> Ibid.

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## Adorno, the aspect of market in music

Bourdieu's theory corresponds well to the dialectical approach of T. Adorno. Adorno uses the typology of listening, similar to Bourdieu's division in societal classes, where the types vary according to the way of listening as well as to the level of education in music as to class position. Thus he constructs types such as the expert listener, the good listener, the cultural consumer listener and the entertainment listeners. Adorno also distinguishes one type of listener which is consistent with the majority of the opera and the concert visitors, namely the cultural consumer. This type listens to a fair amount of music, respects it and possesses the necessary knowledge. The relationship of this type to music is described by Adorno as a feeling of duty, and a "vulgar snobbery", because of the hidden motive of the social prestige. Adorno also puts the listeners' reaction in an economic context comparing the listening to music to joy of consumption. He situates this type of listener to the bourgeoisie and describes his social character as conventionalist and conformist. This is the type with most influence in the musical life, as it is the largest concert going group, as well as they are most likely to be in program committees of different kind.<sup>61</sup>

On the opposite end of Adorno's typology is the entertainment listener which although largest in number usually doesn't possess any influence. This type of listener is mainly subjected to the music industry, without any possibility of education, especially the musical education and can be found in the lower classes where music is listened to in order to relax or while doing something else, and not for its own sake.<sup>62</sup>

Adorno situates different types of listeners in societal layers which leads him to the conclusion that the typology originates from the differentiation of high and low art, intellectual and manual labor as well as that the different reactions to music, are elements of false consciousness.<sup>63</sup> This, however, does not mean that the typology responds to a kind of social class hierarchy, like that of Bourdieu's taste distinction. Instead Adorno begins by asking if there really was anything other than bourgeois music, and in doing that adds a production aspect to the discussion of taste.

Adorno examines the contemporary musical life in terms of conflicts between different

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<sup>61</sup> Theodor W. Adorno, *Introduction to the Sociology of Music*, (New York, 1989) p. 6

<sup>62</sup> *ibid.* p. 14-16

<sup>63</sup> *Ibid.* p. 18-20

interests in society. The musical life, to him, is dependent on material conditions, as well, as on the position of the social hierarchy also bound to the dominant ideology. He sees the musical conditions in terms of pluralism but is quick to point out the uneven condition of music. The pluralism of the musical life is thus not seen as a positive variety, but an uneven hierarchy compared to that in society.<sup>64</sup> The visitor of the official concert life can be found in the wealthiest layers leading to the highest concentration of capital in that sector of musical life. The accumulated capital is to a certain degree turned in to the esthetic qualities. Highest amount of creativity is also situated in this sphere leading to the exfoliation of the creative power within other musical sectors. Thus by the concentrated power in one sector of the musical life, the cultural variety is lost as one sector enjoys the material monopoly.<sup>65</sup> This uneven relationship between different kinds of music embodies different historical epochs and represents different forces in society according to Adorno.

The official music is also mostly in line with the public opinion and the current cultural ideology, which to Adorno is expressed by the authoritative prejudices. He mentions a couple of different alternatives of publicly postulated opinion, where all alternatives express concern for the new modern music. Adorno then describes those formulations of opinion as an intolerant conception of normality, which he then draws back to the notion of moderation in the bourgeois society.<sup>66</sup>

He also situates the music life of today somewhere in between degeneration of the popular music and the isolation of avant-garde. The inherent division between high and low art is evident in music as well, where it takes on the adjectives of easy and serious music. This division, sanctioned by cultural authorities is possibly leading to a diminished taste level as well as the isolation of higher music from the masses. Easy music is characterized by standardization, uniformity as well as the predominance of the commodity over the aesthetic quality while modern serious music is individualized to a degree of isolation.<sup>67</sup> The repertoire almost always contains the standard classical works which lead to interest in reproduction and preservation rather than production.

Further Adorno states that the number of modern music devotees is still comparatively small in our society. Distinction between the listeners of newer and older art music is described by Adorno as symptomatic for the condition of the society:

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<sup>64</sup> *ibid.* pp. 119- 120

<sup>65</sup> *ibid.* pp. 118-125

<sup>66</sup> *ibid.* pp. 142- 143

<sup>67</sup> *Ibid.* p. 21



“The frightened mass reactions to the latest music are worlds away from what goes on there in purely musical terms, but they respond quite exactly to the difference between that new –now already older– music in which the subject’s suffering sheds the affirmative conventions and the latest one in which that subject and its suffering hardly have room any more. Fear recoils into cold horror, past the possibilities of feeling identification, and live adoption. That horror reacts precisely to the social condition;”<sup>68</sup>

He then nuances the distinction further by tracing a new stream in musical life, which he defines as the middle zone. The middle zone does not only concern listeners but also composers of the same kind of music, the moderated modern music as he calls it. Members of this group, essentially composers, constitute a new genre in music which is situated somewhere between the entertainment music and high art music. Adorno traces the music origin to the stage music, which he also uses in order to describe the term “useful music”. Useful music, for example film music, contains usually a dramaturgical function in order to enhance the overall experience of the performance, or a cultural product. It also calls for a certain type of composer which not only has the music in mind but also the plans for the performance, and all the other functional aspects in music.<sup>69</sup>

“Now as before, the circle of those interested in new music is too small to sustain it socially and economically. An intermediate zone has been set up: a production that affects a more or less a modern demeanour, will even flirt with the twelve-tone technique at times, but takes good care not to offend. There have been moderate moderns as long as there were moderns. While posturing as thoughtful and free from experimenting manias, they always had tired and feeble results, due not only to the material employed but the more noncommittal facture.”<sup>70</sup>

The aspect of functionality in music as well as in the composing process leads Adorno into his main argument about the dialectic relationship between music and production, and the distribution and consumption in our society. Adorno places the production in the foreground of the musical consciousness in society, but he sets the musical production in relation to the technological progress which in itself formulates a need in the society, which is then met by a production of certain type of music. The descriptions are then summarized in a law which states that the societal force that struck the music from outside is then absorbed by the logic of

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<sup>68</sup> Ibid. pp. 179-180

<sup>69</sup> Ibid. p. 192

<sup>70</sup> Ibid. p. 191

autonomy which leads to the fact that the composer's need of expression is transformed into the artistic necessity.<sup>71</sup>

With the essentially Marxist outlook Adorno conceives the music primarily as a commodity in our society. He places the radio, record industry together with the electric industry in the foremost controlling position. High concentration of power leads eventually to the diminished freedom of choice of listeners. The distributors follow the will of the listeners, in order to fulfill the need, which in it self is formulated by lack of choice. The standard is thus made is conceived by the listeners as the natural one, and the false consciousness is built up.<sup>72</sup>

In the next chapter of this thesis one aspect of Adorno's false consciousness will be discussed. That is namely the ideology of autonomy in music as well as in certain institutions of the musical life, mostly the educational one.

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<sup>71</sup> Ibid. p. 211-212

<sup>72</sup> ibid. p. 199-202

*Music and society* contains a number of texts that most directly address the question of the autonomous art, and especially music. Through a number of different methods, combining cultural studies approach with musicological analysis, authors question scientific methods of musicological research which they see as being grounded in the notion of musical autonomy.<sup>73</sup> There are however mainly two texts, that are useful for this discussion.

In the first text, Janet Wolff discusses the development in ideology of autonomous art through history that has led to the unproblematic view of music as non representational form.<sup>74</sup>

Wolff begins with the history of social development of arts. There she takes Hauser's position of economic development in society and parallels it with the development of the position of artist, in which the concept of genius, the development of humanist thought as well as the development of capitalism all contributed to the notion of a work of art as the creation of one sole artist with a total freedom, detached from society, expressing his own personality. Wolff then states that this notion of a free, original artist resulted in a number of growing institutions creating and sustaining the myth about a work of art that transcends the social.

Wolff mentions the authority of disciplines such as art history, literary criticism and aesthetics as the one of the main contributors to the notion of artist as creative personality, as they focus on precisely this aspect. She mentions Eagleton's work which suggests that the academic art studies continue to operate as an ideology because of their claim of detachment from ideology and emphasis on the nonideological nature of the texts they are studying.<sup>75</sup>

This persistence of the ideology leads, according to Wolff, to a sanctifying canon that is studied for its own sake and separated from the historical, economic, and social condition of production and reception.<sup>76</sup>

However, Wolff states, that while the idea of the aesthetic autonomy is beginning to fade from other academic disciplines, after increasing acceptance of socio-critical work, it still seems to

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<sup>73</sup> eds. Leppert and McClary, *Music and Society: the Politics of Composition, Performance and Reception*, (Cambridge, 1987)

<sup>74</sup> Janet Wolff, "Introduction" in *Music and Society* eds. Leppert and McClary (Cambridge, 1987)

<sup>75</sup> Ibid. p 1-4

<sup>76</sup> Ibid. p. 4

be strangely absent in musicological studies where the ideology of autonomy of music still dominates.<sup>77</sup> She acknowledges that the music's non-representational character seems to be an obstacle in overcoming the notion of autonomy but states that music is far from being the only nonrepresentational art form. Instead, she concludes that ideological meaning can be found on a number of different levels, in stylistic and formal aspects of a text as well as in its content.

Rose Rosengard Subotnik's text also contributes to the discussion of autonomy of music through use of critique on musicological method. She differed between the positivists who study music itself and the contextualists that connect music to the social world outside of it. It is in the argument between the two sides that Subotnik finds her point of discussion and proposes a combination of the two.<sup>78</sup>

Subotnik criticizes the positivistic standpoint for their view of music. The argument that positivists use in critique of the contextualists, that the relation between music and society hides a disinterest in the music itself, shows according to Subotnik a will to preserve the existing notion of music as an autonomous art, and of course musicology as the natural extension to it.

Subotnik also criticizes the contextualists although not for their view on music as connected to society. Instead she states that the contextualists do not use adequate methods in their research, as they do not look for social relation in music itself but in the contexts around it. They should instead, according to Subotnik, look for a positivistically conceived model, in order to study music in relation to society.<sup>79</sup>

The critique given by Wolff and Subotnik opens for discussion of education, didactics, and knowledge, the subject treated by Francis Lyotard. His work uses a different approach and is further discussed in the following chapter.

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<sup>77</sup> Ibid. pp. 8-9

<sup>78</sup> Rose Rosengard Subotnik in *Music and Society* eds. Leppert and McClary (Cambridge, 1987)

<sup>79</sup> Ibid. pp. 105-107

## Lyotard and the postmodern condition.

In “*The postmodern condition*” F. Lyotard discusses the temporary condition of knowledge. He uses the term postmodern for description of the temporary condition, and defines it as the “incredulity towards metanarratives”.

In his theory Lyotard uses a number of different methods taken from the field of linguistics, such as the various types of utterances, language games and narratives. According to Lyotard, each type of utterance carries its own set of rules and is therefore called a language game. The rules of a language game are not consistent but change with each new game, and thus a certain utterance should be seen as a move in the game rather than a strategy. The use of this methodological approach helps Lyotard in understanding the condition of knowledge but is even more important for his understanding of the society. The analogy of language games makes possible the description of social relations in society as Lyotard perceives them:

“I am not claiming that the entirety of social relations is of this nature –that will remain an open question. But there is now need to resort to some fiction of social origins to establish that language games are the minimum relation required for society to exist: even before he is born, if only by virtue of the name he is given, the human child is already positioned as a referent in the story recounted by those around him, in relation to which he will inevitably chart his course.”<sup>80</sup>

Lyotard's conception of the society poses a main model of explanation for all aspect discussed in the work. Thus he states that this conception of society differs somewhat from other's that seem to detect dissolution of social bonds in the postmodern. With use of the language game methods Lyotard argues against this position, and states that even though we are individuals, we are never entirely alone. The communication is always present in form a language games.

In the discussion of the grand narratives Lyotard begins with describing two leading methodological approaches. The first conceives the society as one organic whole that regulates itself and is represented by T. Parson. The other one is built on the principle of conflict theory that divides society in two groups with the opposing interests. This approach is represented by K. Marx. The two approaches are however not applicable to our contemporary postmodern era, as they belong to modernity. Here too Lyotard uses his conception of the

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<sup>80</sup> Jean- Francois Lyotard, *The Postmodern Condition: A Report on Knowledge* (Minneapolis, 1993) p.15

society as the argument against the applicability of the two approaches. He states that those have lost their validity with the loss of grand narratives that governed the production of scientific knowledge.

For Lyotard, scientific knowledge is a discourse, as well as only one part of knowledge. The knowledge outside the discourse Lyotard names is narrative knowledge, i.e. the kind of knowledge that is not included in the scientific discourse, the knowledge of people. The science although dismissive of the narrative knowledge makes use of the narrative itself for its own legitimating. Lyotard refers to the use of the narrative by pointing out its beginnings in the Platon's "*Dialogues*" where the pragmatics of science is both implicitly and explicitly in use.<sup>81</sup>

The use of the narrative for legitimating of science has evolved in two ways. Both versions of the narrative, are according to Lyotard, particularly important for the our modern history, the history of knowledge, and for its institutions<sup>82</sup>

The first of these narratives can be thought of as narrative of emancipation, where people are seen as rightful owners to science, and where the subject of the science are people. The second one is of more philosophical character and can be thought of as the story of spirit, where the subject of knowledge is the speculative spirit.

Both of those narratives i.e. grand narratives are through different ways incorporated in the legitimating of knowledge. What Lyotard suggests is that both versions of the narrative seem to be loosing the importance of the legitimation of the science itself. It is the scientific requirement of truth that has put into question the method of legitimating of science, thus creating the fall of the narratives used for the legitimation of the science itself.

The underlying principle of the narrative is the need for consensus which also has been the underlying factor in the emergence of it.

Today when grand narratives have lost their prominence in legitimation, we still have the small narratives which seem to be essential for the, validation of the postmodern science, those small narratives do not strive to reach to the consensus but instability, as a practice of paralogism, where the point is the search for justice which is not based on agreement.

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<sup>81</sup> Ibid. p. 29

<sup>82</sup> Ibid. p. 31

## Interviews

This chapter discusses different aspects gained from the interview material. It also contains quotes from and a presentations of the interviews in order to give a fuller and livelier picture of the conversations and of course the people behind.

## History and development

All of my interview subjects all have a rich experience in musical life of today. They all have careers within the musical sphere but their interests within the field vary accordingly. Two of the interviewees are composers, one is a leader of symphonic orchestra and one is musicology professor. They all have different interests in music which vary according to their age and occupational field. For example the youngest of them is interested in popular music as well as art music, while the opera composer's interest lies in mostly in the vocal works.

Their different interests but also their occupations within the musical life provided different ways of explanation in the interviews.

My third interviewee, "Mattias", is a man in his late twenties who just finished his musical education and is about to make a career as a composer. I was really excited to hear his view as he was the youngest of the interviews. We sat in a local pub with a cup of coffee and after the short presentation I started the interview by asking him to explain his perception of the historical development of music. I also wanted an explanation as to why older art music still enjoys such popularity in comparison to contemporary art music.

The young composer had a literary studies background, (he had studied comparative literature for two of terms) that offered a frame which helped him explained the musical development in history:

"Something has, kind of happened to classical music [---] You could look upon it as that classical music written up until the turn of the century, from 1800 to 1900 was written [...] was written within the same language system, the major and minor system which then... Hmmm... You could say, you could say that it was complete by roughly 1750. You couldn't set an exact date for it but it fully developed about this time. And then by the 1900s the system had begun to dissolve and because of modernisms break-through and its language system, the musical language system has in some way developed even since... Hmmm... Yeah as long ago as our

notation goes, from Gregorian notation forwards [...]. So in other words it took a long time to develop, but the language system that modernism created was created, in principle, overnight, in comparison. It was only really over 50 years that the tonality was disbanded, it wasn't only that major and minor tonality was dissolved but that all tonality was broken down with the introduction of Schoenberg's twelve-ton music and possibly most importantly Webern and his successors etc, who had such a great effect, so the development went relatively fast. And that could be an explanation for the lost audience.”<sup>83</sup>

His answer unexpectedly revealed a surprisingly common view of the development of music, which later struck me as similar to those of the other three interviews, despite the age difference of more than two decades between them.

The other interviewees all offered seemingly the same explanation regarding the development of art music, with small differences when it came to the usage of the terms. The answers were mainly an explanation of historical development of music in a linear manner before and after 1950: s, but with usage of both literary and musical terms. For example: my fourth interviewee a musicology professor named Andreas, also conceived of music in terms of different musical languages, similar to the literary theories of the young composer. He thought that the musical language of the past was easier, not chaotic, as opposed to contemporary languages that we don't know and that possibly create a form of escapism. He also thought that older tonal music could possibly be easier to comprehend for the regular listener, while the art music of today could be perceived as more difficult.<sup>84</sup>

My second interviewee, a middle age composer of mostly opera, explained the development with help of the technical musical terms instead. He used terms such as the intervals and chords in order to explain the development. He also thought that older art music probably was easier for the listener in that the musical timeline was easy to follow because of the familiarity of listener, and that it wasn't at all the case with more recent art music.

## **Taste**

The following topic of interview was the aspect of taste. I wanted to know what kind of music the interviewees liked and also the conception of their own taste in music was of interest to me. My second interviewee, Göran- the opera composer, had a very sincere answer as he

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<sup>83</sup> Interview no. 3 “Mattias”

<sup>84</sup> Interview no. 4 “Andreas”



described both his taste and his view on different kinds of art music through a story from his youth.

Here he talks of his first encounter with art music:

“For me it’s never been a big deal if it’s a new or old work. I mean, I don’t personally, *divide* music in the way I have just described;” this is *good* classical music and we also have a lot of ‘weird’ music which obviously *could* be interesting to listen to”. From the beginning I’ve more been of the attitude that; ”ok, this sounds like *that* and that sound like *this* ...” Hmmm from the first classical music I heard, doesn’t matter what it sounds like, hmmm, the first concert which interested me when I became aware that I wanted to *do* this, I’d already been doing pop music for several years, I must have been fifteen, I was about to turn fifteen [---] Then I was, the first piece I heard was by some of my colleagues...”*missa bassa*” it was called. It was totally weird, *that I can* say, then I heard a performance of Stravinsky’s *Petrushka*, Tjajkovskij’s 5th symphony and Dvorak’s d-minor serenade, one after the other. Stravinsky was no more remarkable, I mean it was *really* good as were both Tjajkovskij and Stravinsky so I had to get used to that was the norm...”<sup>85</sup>

What was interesting here Göran’s conception of art music. He declares that for him there’s no difference between any kind of art music but he seems to be aware that such distinction exists for other people. This however does not seem to be the case when it comes to popular music. A couple of minutes later in the discussion the composer compare popular music with art music, contrasting them as opposites. Once again he talks about his childhood, when he was listening to popular music and realized that it was too simple. He wanted a challenge in listening and got increasingly involved in art music.<sup>86</sup>

The same conception seems to be the case with the other interviewees as well. They all seemed to be very open towards all kinds of art music which is however not the case with popular music.

When listening to him as well as to other interviewees I noticed that the music is being divided in the art and popular in terms of high and low, challenging and simple. The two types of music are put by the interviewees in opposition, where the popular music is seen as too simple. However the youngest of the interviewees, Mattias, seems to be more open towards

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<sup>85</sup> Interview no.2 “Göran”

<sup>86</sup> Ibid.

popular music. He listened to it although he was very careful to point out that he didn't like straight edge popular music, but mostly singer /songwriters.<sup>87</sup>

What stuck me as peculiar throughout the interviewees is the clear division between the popular and art music, as well as the no distinction between the different kinds of art music. All the interviewees, besides the young composer came up with the seemingly same answers.

Furthermore they all seemed to perceive their taste as something natural, something they were born with, something they did not question at all. For my interviewees their tastes was something peculiar that in a way seemed to go hand in hand with their talent that helped those distinct those selves, as well as choose a profession within the musical sphere. In order to be a talented and successful musician and composer it is necessary to have a good taste, or at least the normative taste required for the profession.<sup>88</sup>

One can argue that in a way this seems to illustrate Bourdieus conception of taste of necessity in opposition to the taste of liberty that is to a high degree dependent on societal class, or at least on the level of education.

## **Orchestra as an institution**

In all of my interviews a discussion of the symphonic orchestra came to be inevitable. Everyone had their own position towards the orchestra so I came to think of this topic as an important aspect that deserves further consideration.

Adornos conception of the music as commodity can most clearly be seen in my interviewee's notion of symphonic orchestra. Göran had the following explanation:

"When was the orchestra invented? Well the first orchestral institution the MSO type, that was invented during the second half on the 19th century i.e. at the height of industrialism. [---] The large symphony orchestras however came into being in the large concert houses of Vienna and Berlin. They came around eighteen... sixty, seventy sometime. That's when these big temple like consort halls were built. This kind of 'the strings should go the same way' and..."<sup>89</sup>

The symphonic orchestra, states the opera composer, is an industrial institution, a modern one. A uniform institution that is designed to function in much the same way as a factory

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<sup>87</sup> Interview no.3 "Mattias"

<sup>88</sup> Interview no. 1, 2, 3, 4, "Johannes", "Göran", "Mattias", "Andreas"

<sup>89</sup> Interview no. 2 "Göran"

producing a certain commodity. Of course, one automatically thinks of Marx, but what interviewee is saying is that orchestra is a stiff institution and is as such incapable of reproducing music that is not intended for it. He sees this from his position of the opera composer, as the orchestra excludes the operas from its repertoire as well.

Also Mattias is aware of the exclusion of the symphonic orchestra. He thinks that the orchestras and institution designed for the music between 18<sup>th</sup>, 19<sup>th</sup> and the first half of the 20<sup>th</sup> century, and that the new music should find means for itself. He also states that popular music and its media could create a good starting position for the new art music.<sup>90</sup>

In the discussion on the symphonic orchestra as an institution of industrialism, they seem to position the orchestra in relation to the market. The interview quotes do make one think of a factory only equipped to produce one thing. This is where one of my interviewees had a lot to add. Johannes is one of the more prominent figures in the musical life of this region. As the artistic leader of a symphonic orchestra, he has a powerful position which not only demands, consciousness about the orchestra's repertoire but also about the musical market. He confirms Adornos statement but in a different manner, he talks about the reproduction of music:

..." as if it was only technical skills for sale...Hmmm a product... And as all business men know, you must see yourself within a wider context, what are your goals and visions and how do you achieve them. Our marketing manager is very aware of roughly what is happening in society and I, I think that she is an important part of the ideological process and that is not dependent on her saying "now I'm going to sell tickets!", rather that she reads what... Say we speak about that our music is important in a larger perspective.

It's not really so simple or pretentious....It could look like that... you could also see the marketing department as an ear towards society that plays a very important roll in telling us what happens out there. I mean....hmmm....it's too easy for us within the sector to point out the things happening within the musical sphere, to point out the different artists as exciting, a composer as exciting or... but we are still within our own sphere and are supposed to prove something to the rest of the world at large. But there is also a general public that we actually exist for. And that..., in this I my self play a huge part in trying to understand what is actually going on out there, and what I am thinking about in this moment. If you see it in a positive way, people within marketing have an ability to read from. And if you are impartial you simply become someone who follows trends. Than you try to see that this is the trend now and that was the trend then, and than you loose your soul if you just play. One tries to see if there is a curiosity towards

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<sup>90</sup> Interview no. 3 "Mattias"

current music, as I understand it, the trend is that one maybe listens to new composers [---] but first and foremost I see marketing as an ear towards society.”<sup>91</sup>

Also the newly composed, modern music is seen in relation to the same market. My third interviewee, Mattias, states that modern music probably never will find its way into the arena reserved by symphonic orchestra. According to him modern music is still comparatively small, and not fit for the demands of the orchestra as an institution. He also thinks that in order for new music to find its way, to reach out to the public it needs to use different media, and reach out to different audience. It is not the institution itself that is conservative but that the market controls the repertoire he says.<sup>92</sup>

Andreas also had a comment on the orchestra as a profitable institution. He commented on the repertoire and came to the logical conclusion. To him, producing one new symphony a week is impossible to do as it would be irrational and of course unprofitable business.<sup>93</sup>

## **Ideology of autonomy**

All interviewees state that the relationship of musical life to the market is strong. And while they all state the influence of musical life, they do not seem to recognize its influence on the production of music it self. Both Adorno and of course Wolff and Subotnik point out this problem, although coming from different angles. Their argument becomes clearer in discussion with the interviewees. All of my four interviewees describe the institutional problem of education in music when producing the sanctified canon as well as the institutions influence on student musicians and composers. Teaching of certain standardized musical material i.e. the musical canon seem to create a problem within the profession, where the musicians do not know how to play newer non-standardized work and therefore are reluctant to do so.

Johannes, the leader of the symphonic orchestra seems to be aware of this obstacle and describes it in a following manner:

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<sup>91</sup> Interview no. 1 “Johannes”

<sup>92</sup> Interview no. 3 “Mattias”

<sup>93</sup> Interview no. 4 “Andreas”

“On the other hand we have a problem, or not a problem rather that there is an inbuilt conflict in the fact that the education, i.e. musician perceive that you are meant to play what you have been “educated to play; Brahms, Beethoven, Mahler...hmmm...quite often this is the case because it is what their teachers have told them. “An F sharp is an F sharp regardless of.”

And so the question is ‘do you have to play Brahms all day to become a world champion at Brahms? And is it worth it?’<sup>94</sup>

Also Mattias seemed to be aware of the educational influence on musical life. He states that the institution are not even aware, that they in some way deny the influence by stating the freedom of choice in choosing the repertoire, but that teachers influence more than they are aware of.<sup>95</sup> My interviewees that worked in educational institutions did not seem to have the same opinion about the influence they had. Instead they seemed to think quite the opposite.<sup>96</sup>

There is also one other aspect that probably illustrates the autonomy of music even more. The problem that Wolff and Subotnik address can be found outside institutions of music as well. The ideology of autonomy can seem to lead to consequences, outside of the educational domain.

One aspect this is the lack of women in the leading positions in musical life. I also asked my interviewees if they think that the repertoire would be different if this was different. I was extremely surprised by the answers as well as how alike they were.

When asked about the musical life and women the interviewees all stated that there doesn’t necessary exist a problem in musical life itself when it comes to women.

Andreas, for example, states that women nowadays are more active, and that there are more women in the profession than before. He perceives there to be more women in the concert going audience, and that cultural engagement seems to be a more female activity. Andreas seemed unclear as to whether he though musical life would have been different if the majority of musicians was female.<sup>97</sup>

Johannes thinks that the lack of women in the leading positions seems to be more a problem of society in general and than it is not specific to musical life. On the other hand he

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<sup>94</sup> Interview no. 1 “Johannes”

<sup>95</sup> Interview no. 3 “Mattias”

<sup>96</sup> Interview no. 1,4 “Johannes” , “Andreas”

<sup>97</sup> Interview no. 4 “Andreas”

acknowledges that women need to be better in order to succeed. He also does not think that the expression differs between the sexes, and that musical life reflects the society in general.<sup>98</sup>

The other interviewees had very similar views on this point. Although the increase in the number of women composers is seen by them as an improvement. They do not think that music in general and the musical life itself would be drastically affected had the situation been different.<sup>99</sup> When seen as autonomous music seems to stand outside society, and absence of women in music is not perceived as problematic. The lack of feminist influence on art music as well as reluctance to perceive a connection between society and art music only shows how deeply rooted the ideology of autonomy seems to be within the musical field.

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<sup>98</sup> Interview no. 1 “Johannes”

<sup>99</sup> Interview no. 1, 2, 3, 4, “Johannes”, “Göran”, “Mattias”, Andreas”

## Discussion

I hope that the following section will offer a more nuanced picture of the situation in the musical life of the region. The discussion will be comparison between the various theories outlined above and the interviews, in order to reach a conclusion.

All of the theories outlined above have served to complement each other in to creating a more detailed picture of the situation, but they also serve as a critique on one another, thus Adorno fills in the shortfalls of Bourdieu, while Lyotard stands for the critique of both Adorno and Bourdieu. In other words, compared to Lyotard who can be seen as a postmodernist both of the former would be modernists, and therefore a target for critique.<sup>100</sup>

Taste is the first aspect in the following discussion, and here the Bourdieus conception of taste will be useful. Bourdieu shows that while the perception of taste as natural is widespread in society it is in fact constructed in order to sustain division between classes as well as between fractions of these.<sup>101</sup> This is in a way illustrated by my interviewees<sup>102</sup>. They seemed to have virtually the same taste in music, since they all appreciated art music without separating newer atonal art music from the older tonal one. They also expressed that popular music wasn't of any interest, only the young composer expressed any interest in it.<sup>103</sup> If we take into account their current occupations, taste could be seen as tool which divides them from the rest of society. According to Bourdieu, my interviewees roles as music expert's forces to openness towards all kinds of art music, but also permits appreciation of a certain kind of music such as popular music. Those limits divide my interviewees and place them in a certain class, in this case middle class or in a division of the middle class according to their occupations.

Bourdieu's theory of the construction of taste is grounded in his view of society in terms of conflicts between different interests, between the different classes. But this emphasis on conflict makes it hard for him to elaborate further. He shows the construction of taste in the consumption sphere of culture but fails to put the production aspect in position. For example, he shows that certain musical pieces are proffered by a certain societal layer while other

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<sup>100</sup> Adorno, Bourdieu, Lyotard,

<sup>101</sup> Bourdieu,

<sup>102</sup> See the interview chapter

<sup>103</sup> See the interview chapter

works are preferred by another but fails to connect the production of the piece to such societal layer.<sup>104</sup>

This production aspect is successfully addressed by T. Adorno. Adorno elaborates a dialectic relationship between consumption and the production of a cultural product, in this case a musical piece and situates both in class context. Like Bourdieu he also uses the conflict theory approach of Marx but realizes that appropriation of taste is contextual in relation to the current ideology in our society. For Adorno a work by Chopin can be appreciated by one societal layer at a certain period of time and by another in a different period.<sup>105</sup>

By successfully merging the production aspect of music in the discussion of taste he highlights with yet another valuable connection, namely that of music and the market. This relationship becomes relevant in the discussion of taste in following way. According to Adorno the demand of the market is met by musical life. In other words, market sets the need for a certain kind of music which is then met by the production field, which in turn creates further need for the production of the same music. The lack of choice becomes apparent, as well as the further need for the production of the same music, born from the lack of choice, thus according to Adorno the false consciousness is built up.<sup>106</sup>

The importance of the relationship of music to the market can also be seen in the interviews. All of my interviewees see the relationship of music to the market as an important one. But unlike Adorno, they only refer to consumption side of the relationship. The orchestra leader, for example, sees the market as an ear pointed towards society, an ear that should pay attention to the needs of that society. Göran sees the orchestra as an institution connected to the market not only by its repertoire but by the constitution of the orchestra itself.<sup>107</sup>

In other words the symphonic orchestra if seen as an institution, seems to be one of the links of music to market. The repertoire suitable for the orchestra also seems to suit the market. On the other hand, music not suited for the symphonic orchestra is not put on the repertoire, and thus directly marginalized. Although interviewees themselves discuss marginalizing of certain music they choose not to see connection between the musical product itself and the market that seemed so clear for Adorno. According to him the music that enjoys largest “popularity” is the music that is an indirect product of the market, produced for the same market. The

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<sup>104</sup> Bourdieu

<sup>105</sup> Adorno

<sup>106</sup> Adorno

<sup>107</sup> See the interview chapter



conditions of the market are transformed in the composer's creative impulse by means of ideology of autonomy.

Ideology of autonomy is a construction that can be seen as a product of the development of the arts in the society throughout history. (See Hauser s.10-20) It is still sustained today, but the level of its influence varies between different arts. It is however still extremely sustained in music, according to Wolff and Subotnik mostly through canon, as well as through educational institutions.<sup>108</sup> Wolff and Subotnik state that the musical canon is sanctified and that it reproduces itself through mainly educational institutions. The statement was more or less confirmed by my interviewees. In discussion with them the canon was considered as something accepted, and unchangeable. None of the interviewees could have thought of anything wrong with the music that was chosen to build a canon, it was just the way it was. It seemed to me that for them there was nothing questionable about the canon. It contained simply the best of the best.<sup>109</sup> Even the educational institutions were in some way sanctified but there seemed to be some rupture. Two of the interviewees had a somewhat more critical view of these institutions. Johannes saw perhaps the core of the problem with the canon repeated throughout educational institutions: the musicians were reluctant to play modern music, because their training only contained older canonic pieces of music.<sup>110</sup> The young composer, Mattias, was very clear on this as he thought of the influence educational institution has, although he stated that the institutions themselves weren't aware of it.<sup>111</sup>

Critique on the canon, mostly by feminists has in other spheres of cultural life gained recognition. However, as Wolff and Subotnik state it is strangely absent in music. The autonomy of music and the conception of it as non-representational, almost unconnected to the society have left traces in musical life even in other aspects. In other words the ideology of autonomy in music prevails even in the discussion about sexes. Women seem to be strangely absent in the leading sphere of musical life; however they are the main consumers of art music. This was according to my interviewees not an issue. It is not to say that my interviewees don't recognize that their sphere is dominated by men, but they don't see this issue as a problem placed strictly in the sphere of music. They see the issue as one of society

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<sup>108</sup> Wolff and Subotnik in *Music and society*, eds. Leppert and McClary

<sup>109</sup> See the interview chapter

<sup>110</sup> See the interview chapter

<sup>111</sup> See the interview chapter

in general which is only mirrored on to the musical sphere.<sup>112</sup> Of course this is to some extent true but the main difference is still very obvious. In other parts of society and other cultural spheres this problem seem to be recognized and dealt with, which is of course not the case here. Wolff and Subotnik refer to other spheres of art where feminist critique has led to the revising and questioning of the canon, as well as to an improved situation for women. In order for the field of music to achieve that, the canon as well as the conception of the music as non-representational has to be revised.<sup>113</sup>

Wolff and Subotnik discuss the autonomy of music through educational institutions that sanctify the canon. In their arguments they are only touching upon the postmodern critique of the feminist but they are still in the realms of modernism. Lyotard has however taken his arguments into the postmodern. Unlike Wolff and Subotnik, Lyotard sees the formation of canon as a necessary product of the narrative of development. He also goes a lot further than educational institutions and states that the grand narrative itself was necessary for the selflegitimation of knowledge. It is when sciences own requirement of truth turns against itself, that grand narrative becomes sufficient. For Lyotard, this have already happened and the results are evident in a number of different approaches to the critique of the grand narratives as well as in the lack of requirement for consensus in scientific discourse.<sup>114</sup>

Like Bourdieu, Lyotard is concerned with the aesthetics of Kant but he understands them in a different way. He differs between two principles in Kant's aesthetics of the sublime. He first explains the sublime sentiment as the mixture of both pleasure and pain but recognizes that this emotion intrinsically develops as a conflict between conception and presentation of that conception. Thus the concept of beauty he conceives as the pleasure without any conceptual determination that seems to appeal to the principle of underlying consensus, which in turn also seems nonexistent to him. Taste represents that in-between the capacity to conceive and the capacity to represent which gives rise to pleasure. The sublime on the other hand, takes place when imagination fails to represent an object which matches the conception, in other words when we fail to present something that we conceive of, for example the greatness of the infinitive. Those ideas do not tell us anything about the reality of the world and therefore prevent stabilization and formation of taste. The sublime can thus be seen as unrepresentable.

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<sup>112</sup> Mattias, Göran, Andreas , Johannes

<sup>113</sup> Wolff and Subotnik in *Music and society*, eds. Leppert and McClary

<sup>114</sup> Lyotard

Lyotard goes even further when he parallels the modern art and its abstract representation as a way of representing the non-representational. The sublime for Lyotard is not the opposite of pleasure in the way Bourdieu sees it, but a sentiment that exists on different premises. Lyotard proposes this argument as a critique on J. Habermas for his understanding of the sublime, and the aesthetic in terms of beauty, a critique that can very well be applied to Bourdieu as well.<sup>115</sup>

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<sup>115</sup> Lyotard

## Conclusion

As we have seen from the previous chapter, the theories that were used in this thesis all contribute to the discussion in different aspects. Hauser's theory on history of development in arts is useful for giving a frame and a certain understanding of the situation within the musical field.<sup>116</sup> Also Bourdieu's discussion of taste for example, is very useful in giving a framework for the discussion of aesthetics however, it shows inadequacies, as Bourdieu fails to connect a production aspect and only discusses aesthetics of the consumption.<sup>117</sup> Adorno, on the other hand, manages to lead a discussion where the consumption and the production of musical life are put in a dialectical relationship.<sup>118</sup> One can also see that both Adorno and Bourdieu build their theories on the modern approach of the conflict theory, which offers a solid ground for postmodern critique, like that of Lyotard.<sup>119</sup>

Modern theories of Bourdieu and Adorno do make a growing ground for the critique of the postmodernists such as Lyotard but the question about the situation in the musical life still remains. Instead of taking part with either the modern or postmodern model of explanation I would like to see the musical situation as a mix between the two. The interviews I conducted seem to support this to some extent as most of the interviewees seem to still use the frame of explanation of the modernist for certain aspects.<sup>120</sup> In the discussion with the interviewees about the historical development of music they all explained it as a story of development, although with a slight difference in the usage of the terms. The young composer, Mattias (see the interview chapter) gave me an explanation of development that could resemble a story of a grand narrative of Lyotard. He conceived of the musical development in terms of different musical languages and explained that a new language had developed for the new atonal music instead of following the old language of art music. This development had according to the composer occurred too fast for the public to keep up with which then led to estrangement of today's art music.

Also in the discussion with the interviewees about the orchestra, usage of the terms such as modern industrial institution came to signify the symphonic orchestra as product of industrialism.

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<sup>116</sup> Hauser

<sup>117</sup> Bourdieu

<sup>118</sup> Adorno

<sup>119</sup> Lyotard

<sup>120</sup> See the interview chapter

My interviewees had clearly limited the older art music we discussed to the sphere of modernism, which then led me to start thinking of art music of today as postmodern.

As I mentioned Lyotard's theory is very adequate in using as a critique against the old modern theories but it doesn't seem to be as effective in comparison to the interviews.<sup>121</sup>

They still mostly conceive of musical life in terms of modernism. They acknowledge the great narrative of development, the sanctification of canon, the division of taste and are more likely to fit Bourdieu and Adorno than Lyotard.

But my interviewees also bring insight born from the art music by stating, as the opera composer, Göran, did that the symphonic orchestra is an industrial institution, a stiff one that only plays pieces suitable for it.<sup>122</sup>

This answer clearly enlightens one other aspect namely; the most suitable music for the orchestra is, of course, the music of the same period. In other words this means that the new art music might not be suitable for performance in the same kind of institution.

Opposite to my interviewees believes it could easily be so that it is not the new musical language and the difficulty of perception of that language that leads to its unpopularity. Or that as the young composer thought, the new music has to find a new media just like popular music.<sup>123</sup> It might be that the new art music simply operates on a level not suitable for the modern framework of explanation.

According to Lyotard the postmodern operates in the local. Since the loss of grand narratives, knowledge exists in small local context, and operates without any need for consensus.<sup>124</sup> It is also possible to apply this to the art music of today, and thus art music could be seen as operating on the terms of the postmodern while the older art music operates in terms of the modern.

Art music of today is not universal and doesn't seek to be. It also exists on a very small scale in comparison to the old symphonic music that we can find on the repertoire. Art music of today operates on the premises of the postmodern and as well uses the means of postmodern. It will never be suitable for the symphonic orchestra and other institutions of the modern. This leads to it being on the periphery of the musical life. In other words as long as the leading institutions (as well as the theoretic frame of the people operating within these institutions) are modern, art music of today will never be able to find a comfortable place in

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<sup>121</sup> Lyotard

<sup>122</sup> Göran

<sup>123</sup> See the interview chapter

<sup>124</sup> Lyotard

the musical life. As long as a large portion of musical life operates in the modern, music of the postmodern will always be on the periphery of the modern.

Having stated the above I would like to point out that the music itself and its stylistic character are not relevant and that it may well be so that music normally seen as modernist here has a different division. It is not however, in the stylistic trades but in its way of spreading and operating that music becomes postmodern.

## **Some last words**

Finally I would like to say that I hope my thesis offers an interesting input. I am aware that the question and the discussion I have undertaken here is a much larger subject than I can tackle within this limited arena. I have in no way tried to offer any answers as this subject too large to be discussed in this paper. However I hope that my thesis can inspire more discussion in this field. In the sphere of art music of today discussions seem not to be as interesting in comparison to the discussions in all other cultural fields.

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# Appendix

## The Interview guide

Age, occupation, and short selfpresentation

An account of the interviews wiew of the situation in the musial life today

Historical development of music

The social aspect of art music

Interviewes experience of the contemporary art music

Education and canon

The women and the musical life