

BÉLA HAMVAS: THE SEVENTH SYMPHONY AND THE METAPHYSICS OF MUSIC

1.

To say the music of Beethoven is titanic is cliché. But it's true. Not because of its transcendent greatness, but because he robbed the universe. He lured sounds from beneath their cover, tore them from their hiding places, violently yanked them up from where they grew, relentlessly bled them, and raised them from the depths in which they'd sunk. From the rocks and the seas and the earth, from souls, the stars, and the underworld, he passionately, wildly, furiously, forcefully rendered them, entranced them, drew them out and dragged them forth. What remained afterwards hardly matters. It is certain his music is titanic, as it is certain that destiny is too. For what he did, only a titan could have done, what he suffered, only a titan could have suffered. He suffered, lonely, his jaw clenched; this wild-headed, ill-mannered beast suffered for stealing every sound in the world. Only the Greeks could have understood what happened as he became deaf, as this humiliated, surly, half-mad man could no longer hear what he had plundered. And thus, like all titans, Beethoven too fell victim to his own greatness. He, who, even in his religious music, honored his gods by tearing them apart, inciting whole worlds of sound against them, heaping the entire elemental demonry of sound upon them. Though they had no choice but to submit to him; if they wanted to hear music worthy of them, they had to listen to Beethoven. There may be a place for debate in poetry: Homer or Shakespeare, the Mahabharata or something else. Similarly in the arts of painting and sculpture. But in music there is no such debate. Beethoven stands alone. And in all of existence there was one wretch who heard none of this music: Beethoven himself.

2.

The titan is a creature whose power is divine, but whose sense of morality is not. As such he knows no moderation, and for this he will clash with the Great Order, and he must fall. His power is in vain if he does not contain it. It is boundless and inexhaustible and can bear no one as its equal or superior. The titan's flaw is his arrogance. He believes that existence is subject to power—power, knowledge, talent, persistence and will. To him the world is his prey and he must conquer it by force.

In time this becomes his weakness. There exists that which he does not know, and against which he hasn't enough strength: humility. All who develop transcendent powers play with the danger of becoming a titan, of losing restraint, of placing oneself above all and thus they commit the sin of arrogance. There exists that which the titan does not know, is incapable of, and for which he lacks strength. The transcendent becomes demonic and without constraint, turning against the one in whom it resides. It is this power which takes revenge on the person who thought it would lead him to success. He fails because of this power. He keeps winning and winning and winning, mere victory and triumph. Meanwhile, he doesn't realize that part of him is empty, exposed, weak, fragile and incomplete. He lacks the power to stand up and drop to his knees. He lacks restraint,

morality, religion, weakness; he lacks the strength to be weak, and the capacity for gratitude. Thus in this emptiness he must vanish, and from this inadequacy, become nothing.

3.

The titan is recognizable by his arrogance, and by the siren at his side. The siren is the feminine, inner side of the titan, just as the titan is the masculine, inner side of the siren. The power of the titan is the enchantment of the siren. These two are but one. Enchantment and allurement are the ways woman loses her restraint and her obedience, raising herself above the feminine to catch and dominate her prey. Force is the way man loses his restraint and obedience, raising himself above humanity to catch and dominate his prey. As enchantment is the force of woman, force is the enchantment of man.

4.

To define the existence of the titan and of the siren isn't difficult. It is the sorcery of the *I*; that is, it wants to make this *I*, this form, this being as it is, transcendent, to cast it into the eternal: the magic of enchantment and force, for eternity with this face, this hair, this voice, this head, with these hands, this skin and these eyes, with these thoughts, images, wishes, and instincts. As it lives now, it wants to remain forever, unchanged across infinite spans of time. It is unaware of anything better, anything more for itself, because it is arrogant, this *I*, as it is, and is worthy to remain so forever, wanting to be happy as now and to enter a place where no tears can reach. It demands happiness—pure, calm, deep, fluid and sparkling being, devoid of excitation, ascendant over uncertainty and from which rapture has disappeared.

We don't know which came first. But it is certain that when the titan was born and began to pillage the world, the gods banished the siren. When the titan beheld the charming creature he shouted "here she is, it is she!" And when the siren began to charm the world with her allure, the gods banished the titan. When the siren beheld the mighty creature, she shouted "here he is, it is he!" This is the moment when they both slipped. The titan believed happiness to be within the siren, and the siren believed it to be within the titan. Since then they have believed, as every titan and siren believes to this day, that happiness is within the other. They have forgotten what they wanted, forgotten divine immortality. They turned their magic against each other, each making a conquest of the other, charming one another as they have done ever since and still do today. The gods are smiling because they are still biting, tormenting, conquering, charming and tearing at each other; they have forgotten about the rest.

5.

One's first impression, upon listening to Beethoven, is that this man did not write with pleasure. When one sees, hears or reads a great work, the impression is always that the artist did not take pleasure in its creation. Here we recognize the difference between the novice and the master. The novice paints, writes or sings for his own enjoyment and this

enjoyment in painting or writing or singing is important to him. She becomes her own audience, is both the composer and listener in one, at once within the work and observing from the outside. The resulting mess is characterless, dilettante art, like autoeroticism, giving joy to no one but its creator.

We shouldn't write a single note or word for our own delight. Why? It's a secret. And it's forbidden. The master knows instinctively that he must vaccinate himself against feeling pleasure from his own work. As long as he feels delight, he's a novice. Only when it begins to hurt, to be a burden, to constrain, only then does he begin to be a master. The poet must give up his joy in words; the musician must break the habit of finding passion in music. All great works are the result of asceticism and can only be great by sacrificing joy. The novice does not know this. He becomes intoxicated and begins to enjoy the sound of his own voice, but at that moment it is no longer sound, only emptiness. The master is an ascetic; while the whole world may be rejoicing, he remains sober. He has to know the antidote to use against the enjoyment of art. His vow is more austere than that of any religious order: what you create, you cannot enjoy; and only you cannot enjoy it.

6.

Beethoven faced a much greater problem than taking delight in the beauty of the notes he composed: he had to avoid the increasing weight of his duty. To remove himself from under the crack of the whip that drove him towards less and less bearable endeavor. What he didn't want troubled him far more than what he did want. Were his creations beautiful? Were they great? When he realized that they were, he found terror rather than pleasure, fear rather than delight. After all, the only one truly, existentially interested in a work is its creator. It is only he who knows not only that the work is beautiful, but also what it cost. Rather than accept triumph, he conceals himself, offering excuses, reluctance, delay. This is why the inferiority of the amateur work resides in what it declares, whereas the greatness of the masterpiece lies in what it leaves unstated. Rather than haughtily beat his own chest, he would toss the work out. Balzac said that creation always begins with a wry face and progresses through struggle; eventually it entrances, and when finished, we long for it once again. One only reluctantly gets involved with such intensity of being, and once begun, unable to remove oneself, suffers immensely, and in the end is at home nowhere but here.

7.

According to the phrasing of modern psychology, yoga raises the contents of the subconscious towards the threshold of consciousness through continuous exertion. What it hopes to achieve by this is, for the time being, unimportant. Undoubtedly, such a method for raising and examining the dark, sunken parts of life exists. Perhaps at one time the wholly deep, shadowy, Poseidonic being lived in illumination. It is also likely that what now lurks in the unconscious, at one time inhabited the realm of sunlight, and sank because of some cosmic catastrophe such as Atlantis. If this weren't so, we couldn't raise subconscious reality to the surface. For if its place were there, grown onto the shadows, it wouldn't be possible to bring it forth. The subconscious was conscious

once—when humans lived in the light, when the greater part of the conscious hadn't yet sunk. For this reason and this reason only, those things which are below can be brought up; raising the sunken from the depths is triumph and greatness; what falls back brings danger and alarm; and if one himself dips below the conscious, catastrophe. Yoga is that procedure which illuminates ones deepest darkness and which brings forth what has sunken there.

8.

It is unquestionable that Beethoven's compositions are sound yoga. This is why his works never give the impression that he took delight in their creation. The ascetic or the yogi never admires his own work, and thus cannot enjoy it. He knows what he achieves, what it cost him, what awaits and what he will have to pay. For him music is the conscious and disciplined method by which he raises the sunken, the dimension of sound is the dimension where he practices this yoga.

Asceticism, and as such, yoga, turns the light towards the world of shadows, consciously ushers in illumination, draws out from the darkness those forms which psychology calls archetypes. The archetype is a form independent of humans, an ancient form, a primitive being, a primordial manifestation, essential. All of the creatures in mythology are such ancient figures of existence: the dragon, Pegasus, the bringer of light, the angel, the devil, Satan, the protector, the progenitor. The titan and the siren are also such manifestations. Asceticism, and as such yoga, is a magical procedure which is, as every form of sorcery, extremely dangerous. Why? Because as the conjurer brings these ancient manifestations to the surface, so must he recognize and give name to these primordial figures. Whether a person, star, plant, animal, newborn or something newly discovered rises from the unknown to the surface, the very first and most important thing is to recognize it and to give it a name. This name now ties it to the light and prevents it from sinking backward. If one doesn't recognize this primordial manifestation and cannot name it, this ancient figure will once again sink. What then follows is unspeakably horrible. The ascetic begins to identify himself with the ancient form. It is in this moment that, as is familiar in mythology, a person becomes a dragon, a beast or a demon because he believes he is that ancient being. And so Beethoven became a titan, because he believed he was a titan. One identifies himself as the ancient manifestation and thus its fate becomes his fate. Beethoven had the powers of the titan, the charm and arrogance of the siren, and thus their fate became his: retribution and fall.

9.

The early works of Beethoven are glib. This sort of thing, without exception, is the mark of the novice. He still delights in sound, in successful harmonies and resolutions, melody carries him away and he finds happiness in the perfection of form. Thus the work is full of needless details and empty sounds signifying nothing.

This period soon passed. As the material increased, the space in which to contain it became smaller. Time began to compel him. His challenge became to compress this

continuously growing and expanding dimension of sound into a form that he perceived to be unnecessarily large. The space he had previously filled with rhetoric at once became constricted. He had to condense, to shorten, to put away the common, diluted language he had used and find symbols which communicated more, succinctly.

What has been named the Beethovenian *piano* now appeared. The Beethovenian *piano* is a dynamic figure, generally spanning two or three measures. The sounds get stronger and stronger, each tone sounding louder than that preceding it, intensifying by geometrical powers, rumbling and exploding with greater and greater passion, and just when one thinks the roar will burst an eardrum, this entire sound, without any sort of transition, becomes faint. The Beethovenian *piano* is not a crescendo ending in a blaring *fortissimo*, but one in which the force is choked off and restrained at the last moment.

The arrival of the self-discipline of asceticism. As Rolland said, Beethoven is the one and only artist in the world to whom we should, and can, safely entrust ourselves—not because in him do we find innocence and virtue, but because it is precisely he who deals in the most dangerous passions, and no matter how powerful, we know they will never captivate him; Beethoven is more powerful than them all.

As he liberates the fiercest passions, so he defeats the strongest among them. The Beethovenian *piano* is the moment of the liberation of the wildest passions and the defeat of the strongest. Asceticism is the moment when, through the conscious self-discipline of inwardly directed light, the ascetic raises the primordial forms lurking in the darkness and grabs them by the throat. This is titanic motion.

At the appearance of the Beethovenian *piano*, verbosity ended. Plebian and rococo chattering in music was no more. Placid harmony, majestic and cleverly constructed effects, nicely worked-out resolutions and peaceful reverberation no longer counted. Sound-yoga had begun, and the primordial forms of the dark and hidden dimension of sound began rising.

10.

In asceticism one is stronger than the self. The essential ascetic life makes its appearance in the Beethovenian *piano*—to allow passion to freely burst forth and then, in the moment just before it carries us away, to wrestle it to the ground. Through this one becomes stronger than himself.

One thinks he understands, yet he knows very little. How little he knows that he walks on shifting earth. Yes, but what is stronger than what? Which is the person and which is the self? Where and in which is he at home? When are we strong, and what are we stronger than? When is he stronger than himself? When, like Odysseus, he ties himself to the mast while the others cover their ears, just so he can listen to the sirens' singing? Or when he allows himself to be seduced by this bewitching singing and is carried toward it? When is he greater—when he is weak or when he is strong? If he resists or does not? Whose

power is greater—he who allows himself to be dominated or he who ties himself to the mast to defend himself, knowing he is most powerful in this way because alone, he is not powerful enough? And which one is actually the person itself, the self or that which the self is stronger than? Oh, the 'wild heart of man has no country, and never will'.

He is at home neither here nor there, neither in himself nor in that which is stronger than him. And isn't this ambiguous and fated buckling on unstable ground a kind of androgyny lurking in the depths? Isn't the stronger he who allows the feminine hidden inside him, that which aches to give herself over, to begin to speak? Or is it he who fights against it, ties himself to the mast and let's his concealed, male passion for struggle be heard? The man himself is neither; his wild heart has no motherland, and never will.

No one can ever decide which requires more strength, to yield or to steadily resist. Both become one on shaky ground which shifts so suddenly that they converge and become one. And yet they remain separate, giving two different, contradictory answers, the one yes, the other no; here yes and no really have the same meaning, but what does this mean?

To penetrate ambiguity so deeply, carefully, on razors edge, is the greatest of dangers, and who dares come so far? To understand so much? The one glides into the other by a melodic slip, an imperceptible change with an uncontrollable smirk. All plunges into one in this dizziness, the delight of both joy and horror as one: to see, to see everything, to see until seeing is unbearable. Only the wretched need solace. To see more and more, to see even when we can no longer see, thus will the wild heart of man find its home.

11.

Thus sign language was doubly formed. He had to find shortened, more condensed sound images so that, within a timeframe continually shortened and pressed, he could write what he wanted. He needed a Chiffre-language to translate the ambiguity and hidden experiences of his destiny, to tell of all he had seen.

With the available forms—sonata, rondo, fugue, song, dances—he couldn't accomplish such a thing. Nor could he solve this problem with the available music. Create a new music? Madness! Neither form nor music was capable of this new duty. He could not reach that which he sought with the innocent, naive sounds of Bach, Mozart and Haydn. He tried to compress, throwing down a variety of themes; he tried to simplify the form, leaving out and joining movements together. But this was all just appearances. He had to change the sounds.

We don't know in which of his works he took the first decisive step. In going backwards from the end to the beginning, it is impossible to find such a place. Quite possibly, some sounds and motifs came about not as music, but as music beyond music. A fate beyond fate does not submit to fate, but to the destiny of fate—life beyond the realm of life does not live life, but life beyond life, the man beyond men is the man for all men—*Übermensch, Überleben, Überschicksal—Übermusik* is the music of the *Übermensch*, of

fate beyond fate. It is denser, shining, harder and more dangerous and passionate and sober. Beethoven found the place where he could change sound—not form or music—by raising it to a higher realm.

He could then leave form and music itself untouched. Indeed, more than anyone else, it may have been Beethoven who preserved the laws and forms of music. He was indifferent to how the sounds of *Übermusik* appeared in the dimension of actual sound. Their essence is not the sensuality of tone, but sound beyond sound. Beethoven created not a new form or music, ways of expression or language of sound, but rather gave new significance to sound by raising the value of sound itself. He created the possibility in which sound beyond sound and the *Übermensch* could manifest themselves in the dimension of sound. Beethoven opened music to cosmic phenomena, and because music, as he found it, was unfit for such a task, he raised up music itself. This is the meaning of *Übermusik*.

There is no going back. Music can no longer be written with Mozartian innocence or the richness of Bach. From that moment on music could only be sound yoga, consciously disciplined, methodically ascetic, sound beyond sound conjuring cosmic phenomena through sound. Music's naiveté was lost forever: it had become a weapon, a magical device, sorcery, a stage, the rack, cunning, knowledge, the crucifix.

12.

In the works of Beethoven we can trace, step by step, *Übermusik's* oppression of the old sounds by way of the inherited dimension of sound, its increasing autocracy gaining more and more ground. For this no parallel exists. In the world of painting, everyone paints in the same language, the language in which Mozart and Handel wrote. This is the language of poets from Sappho to Keats. Neither the painter nor the poet, nor anyone else, can rise above language and into the realm of the superhuman. Music itself says that it is the art form which actually steps into that higher realm only hinted at by other arts and science. No one in the arts but Beethoven had this titanic nature.

The crucial periods are also recognizable. The first centers around works such as the *Pathétique*, the sonatas for violin, for piano and for orchestra. A peculiar resoluteness begins to sound, expressed in such a way that, while all seemingly remains untouched, a terrible despotism makes its stealthy appearance. It was likely then that he shattered the first pillars in the background. He had begun to become fragmented, unpredictable, captivating and magical. The form, of course, remained, indeed becoming seemingly more and more perfect. *Übermusik* broke the sensuality of sound, scorching it. The second period, as Rolland also denotes, clusters around the *Eroica* and the *Appassionata*. It isn't difficult to determine the meaning of this bursting, heroic passion. The whole world is burning red, and molten dragons swarm out of the stirred up darkness.

Then the third period arrives, playing the same role as the Beethovenian piano. The smothering of aroused passions. Particularly in the Fifth symphony, but starting here and

proceeding all the way up to the *Mass*. A dense texture becomes more prominent. Even those things found in the last sonatas and quartets make an appearance here. For this there are no words. That which comes closest is velocity. As one flying with the speed of a celestial body in outer-space, a meteor, and yet this barely traceable, dreadful tempo doesn't stun: the one flying is in complete possession of his senses, he is not just following the tempo, but setting it. Meanwhile he sees all, a hundredth of a second being long enough for him to recognize anything. He spans light-year distances with boundless self-confidence and control.

The final stage comprises the late sonatas, the *Great Mass* and the *Ninth Symphony*. The previous image has changed: In the center of infinite space stands the sorcerer, like the conductor of the orchestra—as he moves his magic baton, scorching sparks fall like rain, a mountain suddenly shoots up with a frightful din, its peak glimmering in a halo of light; comets swirl by, the sea moves, slowly heaves, sighs. Cosmic visions pour forth: at first slowly, then suddenly, as lightning; calm, then frenzied; quietly, then roaring; and one will, one power creates and conducts it all: the Great Sorcerer.

13.

The *Seventh Symphony* is from the beginning of the last stage. Much rubbish has been written about this symphony. Wagner called it pure dance. Obussier wrote that this is the Greek symphony, just as Hölderlin's *Hyperion*, Goethe's *Iphigenia*, and Nietzsche's *Dionysus* and *Apollo* are Greek. And Greek it is, because in it "the delight of majestic, religious devotion meets the rapture of life." Well, yes. These descriptions are somehow true. Just because. Yes, just because.

Motifs are not the point here. Analysis, as well, is useless. The motif in this period does not have independent meaning for Beethoven. The motif is a way for him to find the shortest path to get to the essence. To look at it from another perspective, there is language, which posits that we can grasp meaning through definition. Here definition has an independent meaning: it signifies meaning, it *is* meaning. Another language uses spells and practices magic; spells have no independent meaning, they are but implements which can only conjure if used correctly.

The music before Beethoven was written in the language of definitions. A motif had autonomous meaning. In the music of Beethoven the motif is the shortest route to the essential, the notation of magical sound which, if used with adequate skill, can magically bring forth hidden reality.

14.

What is in the first movement returns once again for Beethoven in one of the late sonatas, in a few bars: the first half of the second movement of the A-major *sonata*. It appears yet again after Beethoven in the second movement of Schumann's C-major *Fantasy* as the first of the secondary themes.

It can be understood without any particular effort, and so it's best if we get to the matter at hand. It is a perfectly ordinary human characteristic to take pleasure in the singing of birds.

Especially in the spring, in May, especially in the song of the nightingale. As it turns out, for humans, the warbling of birds is but an easily forgettable sound-scent, however pleasant, only a hasty impression of blooming and mildness which cannot touch one's immediate existence. Almost everyone takes pleasure from the warbling of birds, but few understand birdsong. Some time ago it was said that Saint Francis understood the language of birds. Today, not only are the themes and motifs of birdsong collected, just as folksongs and old books, but they have also been turned into a science. But we disappointedly put aside those works about the music of birds. As it turns out, collectors haven't a clue about this music.

The difference between the music of humans and that of birds resides in the difference in their respective architectures. Is there an architecture for the emotional improvisation of birds? One mustn't forget the connection between music and architecture. And if there is a connection between the symphony and the temple, the same relation applies for the thrush-song and the bird's nest.

However, it is not easy to understand this music at all. Birdsong differs from the music of humans not as one composer's music differs from another's, not as one era's or people's music differs from another's. Whatever that music, be it ancient, Persian, Hindu, Japanese, modern, none can express more than what humans are capable of expressing. The difficulty in understanding bird music resides in the near impossibility of experiencing the fate of the bird. This fate cannot be experienced directly by humans, only indirectly. One can only do this by sinking into the great cosmic Oneness, the Great Center of Mystery, the point where fate and existence meet, and from this Oneness and Center can we indirectly reach the being of a bird and thus understand the music of the birds. And so, without exception, this state can only be reached and experienced from within, with the help and intervention of the Great Oneness of the Cosmos, and from without, in an indirect way. For this reason the scientist does not understand birdsong as Saint Francis, who by the grace of the Great Center did understand the birds, and could talk with them.

15.

Who understands even a single bird sound has undoubtedly experienced that the primordial forms of all kinds of music exist in this music. For humans, expression, revelation, speech and association have other forms: gesture, speech, color, medium, writing. The bird has nothing but its voice. The bird is the most social, communicative and genial of creatures, and therefore its voice is of the utmost importance. Delamain, owing to whom we have the most beautiful books on birds, says that this little social creature cannot live a single moment without a companion, friend or lover with which to constantly share its feelings and experiences. It needs to communicate unceasingly with

its winged companions. For the bird, the whole of existence is expressed in sound: good feelings, light, joy, togetherness, that their feathers are the same or colored differently, and that their little souls are different. There is no gentler, more intimate and gregarious creature than the bird, and no creature for which its connection to others has such crucial, existential importance. In great collective enterprises such as common migration, they show the same touching and astonishing faithfulness as one finds in wonderful friendships or perfectly happy and devoted marriages. All this opulent friendship, loving and socializing, communication and warm fate manifests itself in but a single way: the sound of music.

That is why the primordial has to be here, in the song of birds. Every musical archetype, each of music's ancient figures must be here. The ancient motifs of music remain in the song of birds. With this knowledge, if one listens to the song of birds over many years, the primordial manifestations of music will open up for her.

16.

To begin, we shouldn't think that all is settled with bird music. Quite the contrary. Such a thing as bird music only exists for the unfamiliar—and there is no thrush music or lark music, no titmouse music. Every thrush, lark and nightingale has a personal, individual music so completely its own that one bird's song differs from another's more than Egyptian music from modern, or the national anthem of the Australians from Debussy. This does not mean that the music of birds is without tradition. Delamain writes that when a little thrush begins to see light and becomes aware of things other than her stomach, she fills herself with those songs her father sings above the nest, and when she begins to speak the following spring, she sings the songs of her father. Barely a few weeks pass before she leaves those learnt motifs behind and becomes more and more individual. By the second spring of her life, she is already a perfectly distinct artist. There is another example, which we often experience. On some hills, in some valleys or forests where a particularly exceptional artistic personality appears, the others involuntarily come under his influence, taking on its dynamics, rhythm, stealing bits from his motifs, but mainly from his style. This songbird has an unprecedented stylistic sense. These concerts can be listened to through whole afternoons and evenings: there isn't a single out of place, out of tune or redundant note in this original and individual piece.

That no general bird music exists, not even nightingale or thrush music, but only the music of individual beings, is also evident in that one bird's music cannot be translated into another's. Everyone knows, or at least suspects, that writing down the tunes of birds is pointless. Once written down these notes are in the language of humans, not in that of the thrush. They can't be sung or played on any kind of musical instrument. They cannot be removed from their creator, from the fate of their composer, from their habitat or from the moment of their singing. Not because we lack voice or musical instruments, but because in us they are no longer the same. The song of the nightingale cannot be translated into the language of the lark. Even the language of one lark cannot be translated into that of another lark. The music of each individual bird is its own and beyond comparison; existential and perfectly other in the same way that every tree,

flower or fruit, every day and every fate is distinct.

17.

There is the thrush whose music is characterized as heroic. He is immensely proud, and powerful. He calmly unburdens himself. He is not afraid and engages in fighting courageously and without a second thought. He is straight, pure and free. The thrush whose song pours as densely and thickly as wine—the color of fire and blood, scented and intoxicating. The thrush that is gentle and elegant, with charming grace, softness and playful intimacy. There is the thrush from whose song shines such beatific rapture that one would think her little heart burns in the fire of heavenly bliss. And the melodies of the nightingale—in which smiling melancholy sounds as if it came from a land of dreams! Somewhere the robin's fresh, chuckling somersaults of sound, the skylarks ethereal trilling, the pearly goldfinch and the silvery chatter of the titmouse, all come together.

Bird music in its entirety is the music of the sirens. As with all things important, we can experience this in only one, other-worldly place: The Center. In the place where every destiny runs together, as the strings in the hand of the One.

The woodlark is a rare bird. It mostly sings at night, in complete and utter darkness, when every other bird has fallen silent. Only in a large forest. Occasionally, in the late afternoon before sunset, when in the long rays of sunshine even the blowing of the wind stops, awe-struck. It is immediately recognizable by its chromatic bells. The motif itself is quite simple. Its expression and realization, less so. Slowly, melancholically, this ringing chromaticism sounds pensively, reflectively as someone with a heavy heart gasping for breath. Then somewhat faster, with brief pauses, as if sighing between breaths. The third time it sounds even faster, the lively tempo emphasizing the melancholy all the more. Finally, still faster, now more vehement, fervent, passionate, excited, the falling sound of extreme sadness now rising. All of this sounds with such sweet pain, with such bewildered, charmed sobbing; the crying sadness is so crystal clear and ocean deep, and within it such beauty that cuts to the bone; such burning, beatific ecstasy that in an instant we understand Odysseus, and why it had to be as it was, why the singing of the sirens compelled him to listen, and why he had to have himself lashed to the mast. This music cannot be resisted. The entire world begins to hurt with such elementary force from the boundless depths of humanity; the tempter appears, the longing for death, longing for death in shimmering dress, smiling, promising joyful splendor, flattering with the softness of dreams. At once one finds that he wants to lie down then and there and sleep where he is, to fall asleep in death's eternal silence, awaiting its shining, colorless idyll, until slowly, like the beating of a white bird's wings, death raises him up and flies away with him into the void.

18.

Goethe says that colors are nothing but the suffering and deeds of light, *Leiden und Taten des Lichts*. We now understand that music is nothing but the suffering and deeds of

sound.

19.

The siren-like nature of birdsong is as familiar in Greek mythology as it is in that of the Celts. There are white swans in Iceland, and at certain mysterious intervals they begin singing—it's been said that this singing precedes their deaths, and that they die singing. Icelandic shepherds maintain that those who hear this song "know all that until then they had not, and forget all that until then they had known."

20.

In the first movement of Beethoven's Seventh Symphony the music of birdsong appears, returning once again in the late sonatas and once more in Schumann's *Fantasy*. Birdsong—that is to say, siren-music, sound from among the primordial manifestations, the ancient motifs, the sound archetypes—is the music of the enchanting temptress, the irresistible, in whose smile is destruction, in whose embrace, death. The titan could conjure his feminine half through his magical music, but at that moment this primordial manifestation conjured up its own opposite. Peoples know this ancient motif just as they know the music of the sirens. It is familiar to the Greeks, the Chinese, and the Japanese—who convey this in the tale of Koko-Daishi, and to modern times as well. It is somehow entirely natural that the opposite extreme of bird sound is the chirping of the cricket. It is completely natural that the whole dimension of sound lies between these two—these two extremes are the two fundamental, primordial manifestations: the song of the bird and the music of the cricket. The metaphysics of music rests on these two outermost pillars.

In his *Walden*, Thoreau says “you must first pay attention to the chirping of the crickets. Many can be heard here, around the rocks. But I find it a greater thing if only one is singing. One must think of a late hour, an advanced part of the day, but only in the manner that one can get a sense of the eternal after already having lived for a time. It’s late, but fate is only secondary for its hurried things. What can be heard in the song of the cricket is mature wisdom, which can never come too late, the wisdom beyond dark troubles, cool, rare, ripe, light, autumn-like wisdom, far beyond vehement spring and passionate summer. The cricket says to the bird, “Oh, you birds, you speak with the fire of children, nature speaks through you. The seasons are done, they all sleep, and we sing to them a lullaby. Thus the cricket chirps for eternity, at the roots of the grass, the chirping the same in May as it is in October. There is no excitement in his song, just calmness and wisdom. It is like thoughtful and certain prose. The cricket drinks not wine, but dew. His song is not a short-lived piece of love poetry which comes to an end at love’s passing. They sit on the stems of grass and their singing does not change, just as truth does not change. Only in moments pure and healthy can one hear the song of the cricket.”

21.

Existence has four realms: the solid, the fluid, the extrasensory and simple *being*. In the

realm of the solid, existence is malleable, tangible, visible, and image-like. In the fluid it is sounded and musical. In the extrasensory realm it has lost its graphic and sounded qualities, and is what Keats called *viewless*, the realm of the logos, where existence is logos-like, spiritual, invisible and inaudible, imperceptible through the senses; not lingual, but rather an absolute magic beyond language. In the fourth realm, even this extrasensory absolute has been removed. It *is*.

From the uppermost realm we can always reach the lowest. The *is* can become viewless, the viewless can become sounded, the sounded can become imagery. But imagery can never become sounded, the sounded never viewless, and from there can never become pure *is*.

From above to below the route is free and possible. From below upward, existence is closed, and by and of oneself no one can step from one realm into another. An unbridgeable gap divides the steps, and that there have been some who stepped over is a mystery. It can be explained by neither life nor genius, by neither spirit nor existence. It is not development, not cognition, not sense and not magic. I receive it, or I do not. I get there, or I don't. It is not merit, not struggle not talent, not knowledge. And to who doesn't understand, it cannot be explained.

22.

Long, long ago, says the Greek myth, before the muses were born, humans were crickets like us. When the muses came into the world and filled it with their song, there were those among the people so transported by this song that they could only listen and listen, forgetting about sleeping, eating and drinking, not even realizing that they had died. Thus the clan of the cricket originated from these people, whom the muses gave such a gift that they needed neither to eat nor drink and could sing as long as they lived.

23.

Greek mythology also knows that Eos, the goddess of the dawn fell in love with Tithonus and asked the gods to make her lover immortal. Zeus promised her this, but the beautiful boy began to shrink, to become black, smaller and smaller until finally he had become a cricket. Tithonus became immortal in this cricket-form. The feelings of the goddess Eos remained unchanged and she loves the boy, the little black bug, even to this day, and he welcomes her at dawn with his song.

24.

And finally the cricket song of Anacreon, which cries out: Oh, is there a happier creature than you, cricket? Your food is the fresh dew on the leaves of the trees, you sing and live like a king, you are favored by Apollo, who has given you a silver voice... you have eternal youth, oh wise daughter of the brown earth, you have no trouble, you just sing, and you are just as the gods.

25.

When after the siren music of the Seventh symphony's opening movement, the second movement's steady, soft, two-four sounds commence, we cannot doubt that after the music of birdsong, now follows the music of the crickets. The enduring, slow, quiet, two-four music of the Elysian cricket, played from time eternal, beyond all passion. It is the music of pure existence, of pure *is*, beyond labor, play, love, temptation, and joy, beyond happiness, victory, and beauty, sounding infinitely, silently, in unity, with boundless peace and inexpressible serenity, beyond mortality; the transmutations of fate viewed across eternal existence; out of the immutable, the ephemeral.

It is the siren's fiery passion for life and demonic longing for death, and the slow wisdom of the immortal Tithonus. The music of enchantment and of the Elysian idyll. Reverberation dissolved in sound which makes one shake, thirst, stir, hunger, quicken and want; and beyond the dimension of sound, the tranquility of pure being beyond the insensible spirit world, which sates every hunger and thirst, which pacifies and sobers without smiling, beauty or solace; imperturbable peace, idyllic wisdom, stillness.

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