Translating Music

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Introduction

As an ethnomusicological informed composer or composing ethnomusicologist I reflect much on translations of music which this paper is about. The last years I have been using elements from Balinese gamelan, which I have been bodily internalizing and learning through in total 1½ years of ethnomusicological fieldwork in Bali, Sukawati.
In this paper I will explore the concept of translations in music, investigating different aspects of musical translation using empirical data from my fieldworks and the music I have composed using practices, structures, and principles from my fieldworks.

Meaning and the relation between sign and object

When one translates a linguistic text from one language to another, meanings of each word is formally agreed upon. It can of course have different meaning depending on the context, which I will come back to, but there are dictionaries that explain a common and formal agreement on the meaning of each word. Applying ethnomusicologist Thomas Turino's (1999; 2008) theory based on peircian semiotics, the meaning of a word is the object the word, that is the sign, refers to. This relation between sign and object is called symbol. This relation between sign and object is called symbol.
This it is very different in music where the meaning, understood as the object, the musical sign refers to, depends mainly similarity (icon) and on former co-occurrence (index). Any piece of music will contain many signs, and each sign can refer to many objects, because of semantic snowballing, where a sign already referring to an object is played/heard again and thereby becomes the sign for yet another object.

Some signs are commonly shared in a cultural practice, whereas others are deeply personal.
Likeness of sign and object seems simple. The sound of a piano resembles the sound of another piano, or the sound of a gong sounds alike another gong – at least for some not so nuanced ears. For others the sound of one gong is very different from the sound of another gong, since the one is denoting the last stroke in a gong cycle, and the other is denoting the middle of the same cycle.
For some the sound of a *lelambatan* piece of Balinese gamelan sounds like Asian music, for other it sounds like gamelan, others again hear it as Balinese gamelan, for some as *gong kebyar*, some as *lelambatan*, and some as this specific piece of *lelambatan*.
Grouping elements is fundamental iconic process we do all the time, but the recognition of likeness is depending on the "training" the person has gone through.
Sounds in music can also sound like something else. The sound of kettle drums can for some sound like thunder for other as canons or the subway. The resemblance depends on the ears listening and on the context.
It is easy to imagine the likeness between a kettledrum and thunder, because both are sounding, and even though some cultural understanding can be needed, the link can be apprehended without too much difficulty. But likeness between sign and object can also be between two different medias, such as the likeness between the sound of interlocking patterns in gamelan and the feeling or sight of fingers being woven together. More cultural understanding is needed to recognize such an iconicity, often it will demand in-depth understanding of a cultural praxis.

According to Turino, music may ignite the imagination in the listener because of what the listener understands as resemblance between the musical sound and things outside of music. Melodies rising both pitch wise and dynamically are iconic to an exited speaker's voice, and become therefore a sign of this excitement, also because of former occurrence between the sound and the feeling, an index. Other more abstract relations between music and mood are much based on "cultural musical conventions that attribute mood to certain sound features" (Turino 2008: 8).
For me jazz is far from sleepy, yet for many of my consultants in Bali, when I said I liked/played jazz, the responded "oh, you like sleepy music" – I must say I never explored which kinds of jazz, they were talking about – probably not the kinds that I hear the most. And often I got home to people who were lying on a bed in a really relaxing moment hearing pretty hardcore metal music. If I should hear metal it would rather be an icon and a mirror of feelings of anger. And to the ears of many of my consultants in Bali, the gamelan-type semar pagulingan sounds very sweet, a sweetness non-Balinese hardly hear.
Much musical sign-object relations are private or personal, so e.g. a song we often sang at my boarding school reminds me of those days, whereas the same song might remind my neighbor of his childhood dancing around in the living room with his mother. At the same time, we would both know some of the more convention-based signs, the relations that are commonly shared in a cultural practice.
My friend and consultant Mbok Dewi told me how the gamelan type of *angklung* for her sounds sad because it is played at cremations. This experience is shared amongst most Balinese, but the sound of *angklung* can for some also refer to other object, e.g. to the school one have been studying in where there was a set of *angklung* or to the time one fell in love with one's present spouse, because it *angklung* was sounding at that time. It can also be a sign of collectivity, as so much gamelan, or it can be a sign of togetherness, or many other objects, some personal some shared.
Even though music opposed to languages do not have clearly defined boundaries, and often not as clearly defined meanings, groups of people can share understandings of relations between musical signs and their objects.

Trans-musicking

This summer I was in Bergen presenting a paper also with the issue of translating music, and Sergei was so good to introduce me to Huiwen Zhang's (2014; 2022) concept of transreading (building on William Gass (Zhang 2014: 480). This has inspired me to propose ideas of trans-musicking or trans-listening.

In Zhang's take on transreading Zhang suggests four different elements in making the "most faithful translation" (2022: 407): 1) lento reading, where the reader reads the text in close, and very slow way, noticing important details by going so deeply into it, 2) poetic translation or literary interpretation, where there is a focus on both the content of the message, and on the code, this message is transferred with, which is very connected to 3) cultural hermeneutics, where the reader takes in a broader understanding of the context of the text, and 4) creative writing**,** which is condensing all of these considerations to be read by a new audience.. The four elements are interdependent (Zhang 2014: 480).
In my compositional practice I do not aim at making faithful musical translations, but knowing what could be faithful translations are the base and thereby deciding how to integrate these translations in my music. As Zhang writes to "transfer, transvalue, transform, and transcend the canon" (ibid.)

I suggest creating a term for "transreading" music. Several of the terms already have other meanings. It could be trans-listening or rather trans-music-listening, as opposed to the reading.
That would seem relevant if the goal was to listen in an informed way to the music. Since my aim is more performing and composing music, and because I try to reach out broadly in the translation, the very broad trans-musicking drawing lines to Christopher Small's concept of musicking might be best, but

it could also be trans-composing. This I will develop further since I only too late realized that some of these concepts is already being used.

As Zhang describes transreading and enacting lento-reading it is much as being a geologist (Zhang 2022: 408), slowly studying pebbles, the piece of stone that doesn't change much in time – at least in a shorter time span. Transmusic-listening and transmusicking, must involve rather different elements. In musicology we often read the scores, very close to the "transreaders" act. That might make sense in some musical areas, but focusing on the listening experience, it is important to remember, music is not perceived by most listeners as text but as sound, and even though some musicians might read the music, the performance of the music is primarily sounding.
Balinese gamelan is most definitely not perceived as written music. In rare occasions I have seen a musician looking in a small book where he had a few notes written for him to remember the core melody, but as overall the music is aural. The musicians are remembering the music by heart, and the audience is listening to the music, so transcribing the music and in that way looking at it with different senses is a very different way of acknowledging it.
Slowing down the music, as Titon does in learning to play the Bulgarian bagpibe, the *gaida*, or transcribing the music can definitely help the trans-music-listener understanding some elements, especially for a listener from a cultural practice where music is written down, but I suggest it should not stand alone. Understanding Balinese gamelan in that way is fingering with the basic perception of it.
Instead of reading meaningful action (e.g. musical action) as text as proposed in phenomenological hermeneutic, ethnomusicologist Jeff Todd Titon suggests turning Paul Riceur on his head and instead experience meaningful action as music (Titon 2008). Instead of slowing down the tempo in the music and maybe transcribing it in order to read it slowly, I suggest experiencing the music as a listener and as much as possible as a performer.
As a piano and organ player I am used to practicing difficult passages very slowly, playing it lento, but when I have been doing fieldwork in Bali, only in very few instances have I experienced my Balinese co-musicians and teachers slowing down the music. In order to create an understanding closer to the Balinese I therefore suggest numerous times of listening and intense learning playing, experiencing the music as a listener and performer, will be more fitting. In that way learning the aesthetics will be possible.
In the literary interpretation or poetic translation understanding the meaning of the music and the smaller components in the music is necessary.
As already presented with Thomas Turino's theory music differs dramatically from text, because of the relation between sign (the written text/the sounding music) and object (what the sign stands for).
The written text is linguistically mediated and the definition of the word is defined. There are definitely nuances, which Zhang goes deeply into, and many important aspects that comes to the fore in transreading, but the sign-object relation is agreed upon in dictionaries. There are still great possibilities for using semantic snowballing in poetry, but the basic word has a meaning commonly agreed upon.
As stated earlier: Much of Balinese gamelan is also not storytelling, but there are many relations, both iconic and indexical, between the music sign and objects. To understand this, it is necessary to hear and possibly play this music in its context. And therefore once again I will underline ethnomusicological fieldwork as paramount to trans-music-listening/trans-musicking.

The third element in transreading, cultural hermeneutics, becomes very linked to the former point of poetic translation. To be able to understand the meaning of meaning it is necessary to play the music and take part in the more general musicking.

The musical objects refer to much extramusical material, and therefore getting involved in the cultural praxis that the music is a part of is necessary to understand which musical signs refer to which musical objects. To get this understanding ethnomusicological or anthropological fieldwork is pivotal.
The fourth element is creative writing. Creating music, playing or composing, using elements from this music in a different setting. This method or element in creative writing is where I end in my music. Should I create musical translations this would be a valuable method in order to getting to know the music, and finding out what can be expressed in different ways.
To reflect on questions of musical translation and the meaning in music I will analyze some of my data from 1½ years of ethnomusicological fieldwork in the period between 2005 and 2020 in the area Kecamatan Sukawati in Bali, Indonesia.

Balinese gamelan

Different cultural practices will have more focus on different types of relations between sign and object. As ethnomusicologist, dancer and musician I Wayan Dibia and Bali knower Rucina Ballinger writes: "Balinese hand gestures are not storytelling movements as in East Indian dance; rather, they embellish expressions of the body. All movements are done in both the right and left sides to establish harmony and cohesion." (2004: 18) Balinese music are also not so much telling a story, but as with the dance, where there is important object connected to the danced signifiers, e.g. balance and harmony as ideal, in Bali there are important object connected to gamelan. I will get back to this, but I will first talk about translation.
Balinese gamelan is a musical practice, closely related to other forms of gamelan, and yet very distinct. It is defined by the instruments it is played on, and there exist around 25-30 types of gamelan, some forms are very old, some very new and some in between. In most forms of gamelan in Bali there are many common principles, structures, and practices, but a lot is also depending up the type of gamelan, and not least by the period the music has been composed in. In my researched I have played different kinds of gamelan and different repertoires. I will present different elements of Balinese gamelan as examples and discuss the translation of these and how I use these.
I could try to translate a single piece of music, which would be the best equivalent to translating a poem or a text, but as already stated through Dibia and Ballinger, Balinese eye and hand movements are not storytelling. Balinese gamelan that accompanies a dance is intrinsically connected to this dance, and listening to the music without the dance, the music will still refer to a dance, and a piece of music can thus refer to the dance, and other instances to drama.
If I decided on an instrumental piece though there are no story in it. It is an abstract piece of art. And this is what I choose. I will use the example of Rejang Ucek as performed by the group Kwangen playing solely the kind of gamelan called selonding (https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=OUA3fdjTVko&t=305s).
Instead of lento reading I have learned the music by rote learning, repeating longer and longer parts of my part over and over again.
By learning the music in this way, close to the most widespread praxis I observed, I learned not only the music but also important elements in the transmission of the music.
As soon as I almost was able to play a part my adoptive older brother and musical guide and teacher, Beli Meder, would change from playing with me to play his own part. This is a general praxis in order to create a sound of the whole orchestra.
It also taught me much in how to remember these small bits and passages and remembering them as a whole, and how the other musicians where depending on the sound, and sometimes look, of each other to remember their own part.

My part and Beli Meder's part are two interlocking parts, where the two need to fit precisely into each other. Interlocking patterns are used in many forms of gamelan. Different kinds are played in the higher sounding instruments, metallofons, xylofons, horizontal gongs, in a bamboo kind of jews harp, in the drums, and in the cymbals. In the vocal *kecak* also the voices are interlocking. The name of the piece, Rejan Ucek, even means a piece that has this kind of interlocking patterns.
Playing the instrument, I play, I sometimes use a note from the instrument next to me, and also in the deeper instrument, gong-kempur, this is so. The musicians playing gong-kempur play a part of the core melody, and they play it so the one has the lower part of the instrument (or rather it is two instruments, the lowest is gong, and the second lowest kempur) and the other one the higher. In the recording the one player didn't show up, so Bentek plays both parts as good as possible.
The two highest instruments each have their own but they also interlock though in a different way than the instrument I and Beli Meder play.
The whole group should act as a whole flexible organism, but I was not yet able to make the small tempo adjustments all the way through the piece as I should have made.

Collectivity

Experiencing and being told and shown the meanings of these musical expressions are all connected to collectivity. The interlocking patterns have been shown by iconicity to me either as treads interwoven or fingers in between each other. Most of all playing gamelan so much I have experienced many hours of interlocking patterns, most of the time where it was a normal and really good feeling, closing in on normative and sometimes spontaneous communitas, a term for a shared flow, as proposed by anthropologist Victor Turner. Sometimes I have experienced the strongest feeling of lost boundaries, just as these spontaneous communitas. And sometimes when a player of less ability has been going slightly away from the rest of us players the discomfort is strong and physical. Thereby the interlocking patterns are connected to the collectivity by index.

The ear the translation will reach

So the meaning, or at least one of the meanings, of the interlocking patterns in Rejang Ucek or in other musical pieces in Bali are collectivity (the object). So how can I translate this into a different setting or a different language. In defined languages where the meaning is well defined even though nuances can be discussed and searched for, and the language that one translates from and to are well defined categories. It is very different in music. One thing is that I have studied a musical art form that in general is pretty well defined. The contemporary gamelan is something very different, but the repertoires my consultants played have so many traits in common that it fits well with ethnomusicologist and composer Sandeep Bhagwati's description: "Artistic traditions are based on such convention-based languaging." (Bhagwati 2019: 3). There are common agreements on the meaning of e.g. a certain chord combination, instrument or a certain pitch combination. With quite a certainty I can say that interlocking patterns in gamelan (amongst others) signifies collectivity in the ear of a hindu-Balinese in Kec. Sukawati.
But knowing the language one shall translate to is also necessary. Let us start basic. If I was to make music to an exhibition on Bali in a museum in Denmark, I would know that most would be Danes. Writing music that will be performed mainly in Denmark I also know most listeners are Danish, and in this case I would also have an idea of the music most listeners would listen to. Creating a musical sign that Danes understand as collectivity, and maybe more specifically also performing interlocking patterns, would be the first task.
Interlocking patterns can be taken more or less literate and transferred into other instruments and settings. In my Organ Trio No 2 I have translated a specific interlocking pattern I learned in 2020 playing Gong Kebyar with the Saka Gong in Banjar Gelumpang. I composed something that resembled, but was

not the same, and then I started working around with it as creative composing. It ended up as an interlocking pattern: https://olgawitte.bandcamp.com/track/ratna-menggali-s-marriage-theft-of-the-book-of-spells-and-the-last-fight For me this patterns sounds best when the two saxophone players interlock precisely but it proved quite difficult. Sometimes they managed, and it felt wonderful, and at other times they didn't. Here the most important part in the collectivity would be that we have rehearsed enough for them to be absolutely precise. The difficulty in this is that it is two really good and busy saxophone players and to ask them to practice for that many hours it difficult if not impossible, but that would absolutely be the most accurate translation. Another solution could be to have less adequate saxophone players that would use the time, and there I have decided to have those who's sound I really wanted and less rehearsal time.
Performing with two different saxophones positioned respectively to my right and left I tried to make a clear sound of the two needed to create the shared melody. This is a simple and slow sound compared to interlocking patterns in much gamelan, and therefore many Danes, and probably many other people, would recognize it as the collective being a necessity for performing the music.

Other elements of the collectivity such as the sharing of the instruments and melodic parts, the interdependence, the focus on the holistic learning is all underlining the collectivity. This is important in gamelan, where most instrumental sets are owned by a local area, even though it is now more often that a single private persons own the instruments. Also it is quite rare that people practice by themselves, even though those who play more difficult instruments sometimes do. When instruments are paired they are tunes slightly apart giving a shimmering effect, which is necessary for the music to sound alive in my informants' ears. And thus multiple instruments are needed.
Collectivity is thus underlined in many ways. The translation of that can be in different ways and different levels.
Elements such as unison passages without meter as it is heard in much modern gamelan, as this piece of Gong Kebyar (https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=ldPMifPbngc). Playing this precisely also demands a focus on the collective. I did such a translation with both a unison passage and interlocking patterns as can be heard in Organ Trio No 1 (https://olgawitte.bandcamp.com/track/prestissimo). Here I let the interlocking patterns is of a different kind and more simple than in Organ Trio No 2, in triplets.
And creating a soundscape with instruments playing around with intonation creating the beating effect again demands more instruments, and in that way show the need of more than a single player. I am not so sure though that collectivity is what comes to the fore of the mind for a Dane listening to two horns intonating differently.

Other meanings in Rejang Ucek

Other elements in playing such a piece also has "meanings" or objects to the musical sign, such as the scale and the instruments.
The instruments it is played on also has a special meaning. I hadn't been to Bali during my first fieldwork in 2005 when I heard selonding for the first time. In a performance in Nusa Dua 9th Festival the now deceased choreographer and dancer I stayed with, I Nyoman Budi Arta, had created a piece using new theatrical elements, but also the music way new in a way that got all the video-camera-bearer's to run to the stage and film the musicians on the right side of the stage. In the middle of the piece part of the group of musicians started playing selonding instead of the type of gamelan that had been played so far, a type normally played as entertainment. Selonding was following a scene with some of the dancers enacting a prayer. I was told it was the first time selonding was used in such a context. Normally selonding is used at the inner part of the temple where people are praying as it was portrayed in the

theatre. The sound of selonding (the sign) is thus by index for most Balinese referring to the object of the sacred, of praying and of being in the innermost part of a temple.
In addition to that selonding is connected with the early Balinese, Bali Kuna or Bali Aga, which were in Bali before the conquest by and immigration of Majapahit from Java in the 14th century, since the story is that the first selonding set fell from the sky and hit the ground in the Bali Aga village, Tenganan.

I could have told some of these meanings, but to tell a story with meanings more language like will demand the use of stereotypes in music. Creating the sound of the sacred would for a Danish audience maybe be using the church organ, sacred choral singing or maybe some specific psalms.

The gentah and pata-translation

In my next example I show the thoughts on translation, I have made in one of the movements in Organ Trio No 2: Calon Arang.
In my telling of the story of the mighty witch, Calon Arang, I depict a priest, Empu Beradah. When praying in a Balinese temple at major festivals, in the larger temples there will be a priest ringing a bell, a genta, five times for each round of prayers. This is sounding in a very specific way and is very clearly communicating to the Hindu Balinese what to do. This gentah is strongly connected to the priesthood, as can be seen in Balinese theatre were priests are often made fun of, and in some instances have a fake (enlarged) genta in their hand. In my piece "Empu Beradah" I used this knowledge to create the music, in the organ sounding as similar to the gentah as possible, creating what Bhagwati calls a pata-translation. Here I have most definitely have been experiencing the sound many times, even though I have never tried playing the genta myself. I have also the cultural hermeneutic background to be able to understand the meaning of the sound of the gentah, but my use of it is not the translation of the meaning, but the transforming of the sound (https://olgawitte.bandcamp.com/track/empu-baradah). No Dane would understand any of the meaning of this part of the story, and probably only few of the other's, but that is not important to me. Instead of communicating the content of the story in a programmic way, I perform a language, I am in the act of making. I am making my own private esperatoe, I find it way more interesting working with other forms of meaning than that of an intelligible storytelling, using stereotypes in order to tell about the characters and their actions.

The four note melody

I will make yet another example where I very clearly am languaging. The gamelan-form baleganjur is mainly played at cremations, parades, competitions and festivals. In earlier times it was also used as marching bands following the army to war. I have therefore decided to use inspiration from this form of gamelan in the movement depicting the king Raja Erlangga, who wants to remain in power also by power using his army. As with the former piece it is for sure very few Danes would have a clue of the link to a military band. In that case I should have made marching music, but wanting to create a musical world I like I need to move beyond that kind of musical translations.

In baleganjur there are only four tuned notes, ndong, ndeng, ndung, and ndang. In the lower ponggang the two notes ndung and ndang are played, often in the basic form "ndung ndang ndung ndang dnung ndang" (syng) where the four reong having the four mentioned notes play interlocking melodies. Sometimes melodies are played single noted, but often the melodies will be played in a way so ndong and ndang har playing at the same time, while the ndeng and ndung are played in between. (https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=tzvHW8AS2fE from 0:47) As you can hear that same pattern played by the reong can be repeated for longer stretches, where all or almost all beats are hit in a dramatically fast pattern. In the beginning of the piece Raja Erlangga, I have made a four note melody,

that is repeated. In the beginning it is played in unison, but then I start changing notes so first the outer notes are respectively what would be like “ndong” and “ndang”
https://olgawitte.bandcamp.com/track/raja-erlangga (from 0:28-1:20). This creative writing in the and a transformation of balganjur.
About the translation can be said that I have been experiencing the music heavily through listening, and in Bali often playing baleganjur, but almost always playing ceng-ceng, the big cymbals that is also a part of the instruments. But the way I have been involved in the reong melody is closer to lento reading. In addition to listening to the music I have read the notes in Michael B Bakan’s book: Music of death and New Creation (1999).
I have practiced this score slowly learning it in a very different way than any other gamelan I have learned. Because I have a set of baleganjur at home, and because of my access to the notes, I have used some of my baleganjur instruments in teaching situations in Denmark, and thereby getting even more into each part of the music. And I have been playing the parts on my piano. I have thus in addition to my learning in the field slowed down the learning.
There are so many interesting subjects to talk and write about in baleganjur, but I have never heard any one mention any story telling as such in the music. Different occasions demand different tunes, and in that way some tunes are connected to cremations, while other are clearly festival melodies. Some are for ngrupuk, the Balinese New Year’s Eve where big puppets are dancing. A couple of times I have been taking part in playing at arrangements at the market place in Sukawati, where all the banjars (hamlets) in Sukawati have been participating with a story, puppets and dancers, and there the music has been following the play. There could be elements that has this meaning, as a story, as a text, but this was not paramount in the aesthetic value nor in the compositional process and the rehearsals. What is important is e.g. that when baleganjur is performed for ngrupuk back in the banjar, the tempo needs to be crazily fast and the interlocking patterns are paramount. Before performing the music, we have a special strong meal and get an energy drink so we are ready to perform and play the fast melody al through the night while the puppets are marching through the streets and dancing at the intersections. Through the evening musicians change place because it is so hard playing the music, and younger musicians can get the change of showing what they are able to late in the evening. The melodies are thus easy an energetic. Very different from the performance in the market place where all the banjars are performing, so they want to make a good (showing of) performance that has been rehearsed almost every night for several weeks.
Just in an ethnomusicological fieldwork one possible way to decide on the analytical subject could be to follow where the data in the field leads you. In a similar way I will follow the field in what is important in the music.
As already stated the collectivity is vital in gamelan, and therefore this is a theme going through my music, expressed in different ways that more or less resembles gamelan. I make the presented interlocking patterns, but also slow interlocking patters, musical interferences, unison out of time patterns and have an overall organic time feeling.
In the second example I use the sound of a gentah, but is it possible to talk about translation in this instance. What is the meaning of the gentah, the sound of the gentah would be the sign, and the object would be the priest, at least for Hindu-Balinese ears but not to Danish ears. I am in no way translating any meaning to Danish ears, but converting the sound from one sounding world to a different setting. In Merriam Webster the word translation has different meanings. The first is “**:** a rendering from one language into another” but the second is “a change to a different substance, form, or appearance **:** CONVERSION” and this translation I am making is most closely resembling this, I change the sound into a different substance. If anything it is a translation of a Balinese story to a Balinese audience.

The gap between insider and outsider and the private esperatoe

I can see no way that I change the meaning to "Danish" ears. In making this paper I have moved from thinking of my musical practices as translation into thinking of it as I am creating music in the gap between different artforms. As Titon is describing, he is neither insider nor outsider, a position he found performing the music. For me I guess I am creating music in the in-between position, creating translations or transformations from different angles. As Titon is writing the act of appropriation of another music transformed him. In a similar way, playing gamelan for so many years has transformed me and is informing my musical experiences and my music making.

It is now needed to think that I don't work towards translations as if I was telling a story letter by letter, or by the language based content. I try to integrate structures, principles and practices from Balinese gamelan in my music.

Moving away from the tradition based to e.g. gamelan kontemporer or contemporary Western music, or as in my music a mix between experimental jazz, contemporary Western music and Balinese gamelan, the composer and musician create, according to Bhagwati, "their own private esperantoes. They *language* (verb) even when they do not speak. Languaging is the act of making, or performing a language – not, like speaking, an act of communication." (ibid.) If many have their own private esperantoes? If the composer/performer has her own esparantoe does the listener do so as well? When Bhagwati writes of communications he writes "like speaking" and I understand it therefore as he with communication mean an act of linguistic mediated communication or more formally agreed upon communication as he describes in Indian music, where there is a clear and well defined connection between sign and object, or in film music, even though it might be because of an index. But an index so commonly agreed upon at least one of the objects of a musical sign is almost certain.

But does the listener have her own private esparantoe? Thinking of music as communication, not with fixed meanings but still communication, the listener will also unwrap the musical signs with her background. This background will probably be based in a certain musical tradition, but with so many musics being available, the creation of a private listening-esparantoe is not unlikely. The espearantoes will be affected by the main background of one's music, though.

So far I have presented music as having a Danish audience, but imagining the music being more broadly presented in the world, e.g. right now I am about to work with an Indonesian musician and my music might come back to Indonesia, the idea of the musician/composer is languaging – the act of creating one's language more than communicating in a way related to linguistics – makes sense.

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