

Séminaire du GREAM

Collège doctoral européen - Salle Amphithéâtre

Vendredi 27 mars 2020

15h00 - 17h00

Jerrold Levinson
(University of Maryland)

*Agency and Identity in Music,
or You Are What You Audit*



Let me expand the subtitle of my talk in the way it clearly begs to be expanded. Pending some analysis of what we might mean by a person's identity, you perhaps are, in some sense, what you regularly audit, that is, what you are disposed to listen to in the way of music. But by the same token you perhaps are, in that sense, what you compose, what you perform, what you improvise, what you give lessons in; what you sing, hum, or whistle; what you emotionally respond to, or imagine in accord with, or inwardly second, as you listen to music. In other words, the totality of your musical behavior plausibly contributes to your musical identity--to who you are, musically speaking.

In this talk I explore different notions of agency in music, different notions of identity in relation to music, and how different modes of musical agency enter into and partly constitute different musical identities. The main theme of my reflections is how different musical activities allow for or enable agency of different sorts, which in turn enter into or help form musical identities, which then enter into and contribute to the overall identities of persons. For many of us, our musical identities are perhaps the most important part of our identities as a whole.

Jerrold Levinson is Distinguished university professor of philosophy Emeritus at the University of Maryland and Past president of the American society for aesthetics (2001-

2003). *He is the author of five collections of essays, Music, Art, and Metaphysics (Cornell UP, 1990, 2nd ed. Oxford UP, 2010), The Pleasures of Aesthetics (Cornell UP, 1996), Contemplating Art (Oxford UP, 2006), Musical Concerns (Oxford UP, 2015), and Aesthetic Pursuits (Oxford UP, 2016), plus a monograph, Music in the Moment (Cornell UP, 1998) [French edition, La musique sur le vif, 2013]. Levinson is also editor of Aesthetics and Ethics (Cambridge UP, 1998), The Oxford Handbook of Aesthetics (Oxford UP, 2003), and Suffering Art Gladly (Palgrave/Macmillan, 2013), as well as co-editor of Aesthetic Concepts (Oxford UP, 2001) and Art and Pornography (Oxford UP, 2012).*

Jerrold Levinson has been a visiting professor at Johns Hopkins University, Columbia University, Cornell University, University of London, University of Canterbury (New Zealand), Université de Rennes (France), Université Libre de Bruxelles (Belgium), Universidade de Lisboa (Portugal), University of Kent (England), Conservatorio della Svizzera Italiana (Switzerland), and Centre de Recherches sur les Arts et le Langage (Paris).

During academic year 2010-2011 Levinson held an International Chaire Francqui at the Katholieke Universiteit Leuven in Belgium, and in 2011 he was awarded the Premio Internazionale of the Società Italiana d'Estetica, which resulted in a volume of his essays in Italian, Arte, critica e storia (Aesthetica Edizione, 2011). And two volumes of his essays in philosophy of music in French translation have now appeared: Essais de la philosophie de la musique: Définition, ontologie, interprétation (Vrin, 2015), and L'Expérience musicale: Appréciation, expression, émotions (Vrin, 2020).