

Music as life-affirmation. The value of music in life-philosophy

Project Leader: Dr. Manos Perrakis
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During the last two decades life-philosophy [‘Lebensphilosophie’] has attracted keen interest in philosophical discussions. And yet, its music aesthetics still remain an unexamined area. The project *Music as life-affirmation. The value of music in life-philosophy* aims to fill this gap by investigating the music aesthetics of life-philosophy as a distinct movement in the history of philosophy, covering a period from the end of the 18th until the middle of the 20th century.

The project proposes and will examine the hypothesis that life-philosophy is pervaded by a notion of music as life-paradigm, based on an isomorphism between instrumental music and life. This isomorphism leads to the assumption that music functions as life-affirmation. Thus, it is important to reconstruct the music aesthetics of life-philosophy by (a) examining the view of exemplary life-philosophers on music and extracting the life-philosophical element out of them, and (b) relating music to the philosophical category of life.

To achieve this goal, the methodological focus will be set on the issue of musical expressiveness and life-philosophy’s contemporaneous paradigm of pure instrumental, so-called absolute music, which has been the bone of contention between romantic or literary aesthetics of music and musical formalism since the 19th century. In a further strand of inquiry, we will examine the meaning of music as life-affirmation and see how this notion corresponds to compositions and programs of 19th and 20th century music by taking as examples three compositions: Wagner’s *Tristan*, Nielsen’s *4th Symphony* and Delius’ *Mass of Life*. For this purpose, (a) contemporary notions of affirmation and (b) the focus on life as an ‘aesthetic idea’ of music will be used as a guide. Ultimately, the project will try to reassess the status of the category of ‘absolute music’ and, hence, contribute to the current discussion about the future of classical music.