

Music and Theological Method: A Lonerganian Approach

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Abstract

Music has for the most part been relatively absent from theological aesthetics, specifically in relation to theological method. The epistemological framework of Bernard Lonergan allows us to bring insights from music studies into dialogue with Lonergan's writings on art, the aesthetic and artistic patterns of experience, and music. The author makes a case for the integration of music—both listening to and making music—within theological method.

Keywords

Thomas Aquinas, art, beauty, experience, Bernard J. Lonergan, music, theological aesthetics, theological method

Music in Theological Aesthetics

I have for years and years began each day with Mozart, and only then . . . turned to my Dogmatics.—Karl Barth¹

The gradual (re)emergence of theological aesthetics and references to the arts in theology is by now a familiar sight on the horizon of theological scholarship. The

1. Karl Barth, "A Testimonial to Mozart," *Neue Zürcher Zeitung*, February 13, 1955.

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process of understanding the potential of the arts for theological method, however, is in its beginnings.² Nowhere is this more challenging than with music,³ for the nondiscursive and nonrepresentational nature of musical symbolism stretches theological discourse beyond its more familiar verbal and conceptual forms of expression. Exploring the place of music in theology is a complex field of research. The story of how they have overlapped in the history of thought is beginning to be explored,⁴ but if we focus on more recent theologians, there are a number of perspectives one could take. We find theologians who have made explicit the role of music in their thought,⁵

2. Robert Doran speaks of the need to integrate Balthasar's emphasis on theological aesthetics and dramatics in systematic theology in "A New Project in Systematic Theology," *Theological Studies* 76 (2015) 246–47, doi: 10.1177/0040563915572741.
3. Literature and the visual arts are much more present in theological writing on art than music, with architecture and sculpture beginning to gain momentum behind them. By way of example, David Brown, *God and the Enchantment of Place* (Oxford: Oxford University, 2007); Timothy Gorringer, "Ethics and the Built Environment," in *Theological Aesthetics after von Balthasar*, ed. Oleg V. Bychkov and James Fodor (Burlington, VT: Ashgate, 2008) 225–33; and the various art forms included in Robin M. Jensen and Kimberly Vrudny, eds., *Visual Theology: Forming and Transforming the Community through the Arts* (Collegeville, MN: Liturgical, 2009). It is also reflected in the trajectory of the first journal that specifically addresses the intersection point between academic theology and artistic creativity: *ARTS: The Arts in Religious & Theological Studies*, published by the Society for the Arts in Religious and Theological Studies (SARTS). Although it is now moving towards investigation into other art forms, its initial main focus was on the visual arts; see *ARTS: The Arts in Religious & Theological Studies*, <https://theoarts.wordpress.com>. (This and all other URLs herein were accessed April 22, 2016.)
4. Italian theologian Pierangelo Sequeri traces the history of the interaction between music and Christian spirituality in Western thought in *Musica e mistica: Percorsi nella storia occidentale delle pratiche estetiche e religiose* (Città del Vaticano: Libreria Editrice Vaticana, 2005). Similarly but with a more specific focus on approaches to theology, Jeremy Begbie and Steven Guthrie, eds., *Resonant Witness: Conversations between Music and Theology* (Grand Rapids, MI: Eerdmans, 2011) explores their mutual influence in writers and periods ranging from Pythagoras and Augustine through German Lutheranism, and from the early medieval to modernity periods to contemporary jazz. Begbie has individual writings that analyze at depth specific theologians, musicians, and their cultural contexts: Jeremy Begbie, *Resounding Truth: Christian Wisdom in the World of Music* (Grand Rapids, MI: Baker, 2008); Begbie, *Music, Modernity and God: Essays in Listening* (Oxford: Oxford University, 2013).
5. Karl Barth's love for Mozart's music and its place in his writing process is well documented: Karl Barth, *Wolfgang Amadeus Mozart*, trans. C. K. Pott (Grand Rapids, MI: Eerdmans, 1986). But Søren Kierkegaard preceded him, and the influence of Mozart's music on Hans Urs von Balthasar, Hans Küng, and Joseph Ratzinger has also drawn theological attention; see Pierangelo Sequeri, *Eccetto Mozart* (Milano: Glossa, 2006). Bonhoeffer's use of musical metaphor in his prison letters is another example of the influence of music in a particular theologian's thought process: Robert O. Smith, "Bonhoeffer and Musical Metaphor," *Word and World* 26 (2006) 195–206. Despite the extent and importance of music in their thought, its relevance to theological method has rarely been addressed. For an interesting exception see, Theodore A. Gill, "Barth and Mozart," *Theology Today* 43 (1986) 403–11, doi: 10.1177/004057368604300310.

and those who seem to have avoided doing so;⁶ composers who consciously seek to express Christian doctrine or thought,⁷ and those who perhaps did not have that intention but whose music has nonetheless been taken up as theologically significant.⁸ While scholarly attention to music in theological aesthetics is growing, more often than not writings on this topic are found on the sidelines of mainstream theology, reserved for those who are particularly interested in music, or actively working in theology and the arts. It has rarely been taken as a focus of theological investigation, nor has it influenced theological method as a whole.⁹ This study seeks to find a place for music in systematic theology, and will do so from the perspective of Bernard Lonergan's epistemological and theological framework, placed in dialogue with other sources and studies on music.

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6. Never attempting a theology of art, Balthasar drew more on literature in his writing than music, although he was a passionate and accomplished pianist. His little-known first published writing on music is a short piece entitled *Die Entwicklung der musikalischen Idee: Versuch einer Synthese der Musik* (Braunschweig, 1925). The English title for this book would be *The Development of the Musical Idea: An Attempt at a Synthesis of Music*; however, it has not, to my knowledge, been translated into English. It presents his philosophical understanding of music in its dimensions of rhythm, melody, and harmony and their genetic development over time, describing it as the most enigmatic and incomprehensible of the arts, which, he says, have the role of giving form to the divine. While there are aspects of interest in this writing, they are not integrated into nor indeed representative of his later work on theological aesthetics, and would be difficult to place alongside his avoidance of a theology of the arts and anything resembling an analogy of faith in his mature theological edifice. One exception stands out: in a similar stance as that of Barth, he penned an uninhibited "Ode" to Mozart's musical genius as encapsulating and evoking paradise, a realized eschatology, free of human frailty and sin. The tribute, however, is neither nor developed. Sequeri suggests that in this writing Balthasar goes further in the appreciation of the theological potential of art than anywhere else, and that he did not, or perhaps even could not, draw out its implications in his theological framework. Sequeri, *Eccetto Mozart* 75–90.
 7. Consider, for example, Johann Sebastian Bach, Oliver Messiaen, Arvo Pärt, or James MacMillan. See, Jaroslav J. Pelikan, *Bach among the Theologians* (Philadelphia: Fortress, 1986); Hans Küng, *Mozart: Traces of Transcendence* (London: SCM, 1992); Andrew Shenton, ed., *Messiaen the Theologian* (Farnham, Surrey: Ashgate, 2010); Stephen Schloesser, *Visions of Amen: The Early life and Music of Messiaen* (Grand Rapids, MI: Eerdmans, 2014).
 8. Most of the interest gleaned by Mozart's music focuses on his nonreligious music, rather than his religious compositions: Sequeri, *Eccetto Mozart* 6–14; David J. Gouwens, "Mozart among the Theologians," *Modern Theology* 16 (2000), doi:10.1111/1468-0025.00141.
 9. Two recent studies identify that gap explicitly in how they approach their overall focus: *The Oxford Handbook of Religion and the Arts*, ed. Frank Burch Brown (Oxford: Oxford University, 2014) has two complementary sections on "Artistic Ways of Being Religious" and "Religious Ways of Being Artistic." And Begbie, *Resounding Truth: Christian Wisdom in the World of Music*, speaks of "Theology for Music" and "Music for Theology" (what theology has to offer music and music has to offer theology, respectively).

Which aspects of music are we seeking to address? Working with the commonplace scholarly understanding of music as embodied practices involving music-making and/or music-hearing, I will focus on the two dimensions on either side of the hermeneutical endeavor: the musical creativity involved in making music—composing, arranging, and performing; and that of interacting with music receptively—listening and interacting with music performed or played.¹⁰ The former corresponds with what Lonergan describes as the artistic pattern of experience (applied to music), the latter to the aesthetic pattern of experience. I will explicate what he intends with this terminology, and claim that both aspects of our experience of music have a place in theological method. Most theologians have an experience of listening to and appreciating some form of music, which may already, or could fruitfully affect and enrich our theological outlook.¹¹ Some theologians also experience the artistic dimension of musical creativity—making music, at some level. My thesis is that both of these distinct dimensions of music have a place in theological method.

One might well ask why I turn here to Lonergan, for he wrote little on beauty or art and even less on music, and is not usually consulted for theological aesthetics.¹² However, what he did write, situated within a coherent epistemological methodology, is clear and allows us to ask the necessary questions around music's role in theological method as well as theology's understanding of music, in terms of its effect on human

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10. These two dimensions clearly relate to aspects of our hermeneutical approach to meaning in relation to literature: meaning behind the text and before the text. However, according to musicologist Jean Jacques Nattiez, a full analysis of musical meaning unfolds into six different, albeit related levels and approaches. Jean-Jacques Nattiez, *Music and Discourse: Toward a Semiology of Music* (Princeton: Princeton University, 1990).
 11. For a fascinating article inviting us to read Augustine alongside and through four traits of jazz improvisation, with the invitation to listen to specific pieces of music included in the article, see William Harmless, "A Love Supreme: Augustine's 'Jazz' of Theology," *Augustinian Studies* 43 (2012), doi:10.5840/augstudies2013431/27. Anthony J. Godzieba's use of Bach's *Goldberg Variations BWV 988* in his plenary address to the 2014 Catholic Theological Society of America is also noteworthy; Godzieba, "'... And Followed Him on the Way' (Mk 10:52): Identity, Difference, and the Play of Discipleship," *Proceedings of the Catholic Theological Society of America* 69 (2014), <http://ejournals.bc.edu/ojs/index.php/ctsa/article/view/5501>.
 12. One exception is a study by Hilary A. Mooney of Lonergan's thought in relation to Balthasar: H. A. Mooney, *The Liberation of Consciousness: Bernard Lonergan's Theological Foundations in Dialogue with the Theological Aesthetics of Hans Urs von Balthasar* (Frankfurt: Knecht, 1992), which is a thorough, early study of the theme bringing these two very different authors into conversation. In identifying the lack of "integration with a critical, rational theory of cognition" in Balthasar's work, she anticipates a consensus among scholars working in theological aesthetics that Balthasar's incomparable work in laying the foundations for work on beauty and the arts lacks an epistemological framework to complement and implement it. Pierangelo Sequeri expresses it as the need for a "phenomenology of the truth" to fill the gap left between Balthasar's "perception of the form" and a phenomenology of perception. See Sequeri, *Anti-Prometeo: Il Musicale nell'Estetica Teologica di Hans Urs von Balthasar* (Milano: Glossa, 1995) 87. See also Alejandro Garcia-Rivera, *The Community of the Beautiful: A Theological Aesthetics* (Collegeville, MN: Liturgical, 1999).

experience and also on the different ways human thought interacts with and makes sense of reality (described by Lonergan as “patterns of consciousness”). His critical realism and intentionality analysis offer a basis on which to interact with a diversity of studies on music so as to build our knowledge in this field. Current momentum around developing a more comprehensive and systematic approach to theology from a Lonerganian perspective,¹³ as well as recent clarification of his thought on beauty, make it an opportune moment to reflect on the place of the arts, particularly music, in his understanding of theological method.¹⁴

With the aid of Lonergan’s thought, I seek, then, to make a case for the use of music in theological method, in both listening to music and the creative process of making music. In the same way that Lonergan did not try so much to do theology as to prepare an epistemological framework for undertaking theology, the aim here is to highlight the issues involved in integrating the human activity and art form that is music into theological reflection, and point to some pathways forward. These are some of the issues, formulated as questions, that a fundamental theological aesthetics should be addressing:

- Can and should music be integrated more fully into theological thought, not only as an example or illustration of theological reasoning but as an intrinsic source and form of reflection? I am speaking not only of reflections on music as a topic, but the actual presence of music in and as a source for theology, and even as a form of theological reflection. Could musical composition and performance have a place in expressing or even breaking open theological meaning? How would we assess and verify its comprehension in those who listen, and would a greater understanding of how music works facilitate that process?
- Is there a relationship between aesthetic and artistic patterns of experience in music (reception, composition, and/or performance) and theological creativity?¹⁵
- What benefit is to be gained by expanding and integrating diverse patterns of experience and thought, such as the aesthetic and artistic, into theological thinking? And what would this imply in relation to music?¹⁶

13. Doran, “A New Project in Systematic Theology.”

14. John D. Dadosky, *The Eclipse and Recovery of Beauty: A Lonergan Approach* (Toronto: University of Toronto, 2014).

15. Perhaps this can be seen more clearly in comparing the creative process involved in making music and writing theology, but as noted above in the reference to Barth, listening to music may be more intrinsic to many people’s understanding of theology than is apparent.

16. What each of these entails in relation to music will be developed later, but at this stage it is enough to understand that for Lonergan, the aesthetic pattern of experience is our receptivity to a form of meaning that is post-biological but pre-conceptual, symbolic, elemental, and situated in an immediacy of experience. The artistic pattern is the poietic side of artistic meaning, where meaning is expressed creatively in works of art. For Lonergan, this latter pattern is closely related to our own making of ourselves in what he refers to as the dramatic pattern of experience.

- How would the integration of music (understood as a symbolic form) into theology affect the language we use, not only in speaking about beauty, aesthetics, and a theology of art, but even other areas of theological concern?

A Fundamental Premise

Before starting and by way of a premise, there is an underlying concern which (while seemingly personal) guides the intentionality and focus of this study and which I believe has implications for future interaction between art and theology at many levels: the position from which I speak about music is as much that of a musician as a theologian,¹⁷ and my attempt is to intentionally try and hold together both the musical and theological identities and patterns of experience, without sacrificing one to the other. Despite the growing interest in and use of music in theological forums, it is usually the former that is sacrificed to the latter. In conferences and classes alike, the dilemma is that of how to combine words and music: speaking of music without hearing a note seems a contradiction in terms, yet how to introduce it is also a problem, not only because of time constraints—music’s relationship with time is one of the first characteristics of musical symbolism that theology became aware of¹⁸—but also because it implies a shift to a different pattern of consciousness than the one in which theology normally works. Written research about the theological significance of music presents analogous dilemmas: Does one draw on the growth of online interaction and provide links so readers can listen to the music? Will readers actually take the time or simply presume the conceptual explanation produces a sufficient understanding of the theme? Or when the analysis of written music is offered, how does one present a score so that it makes sense for theologians who either have no musical training or simply do not integrate it into their theological work? Lonergan’s main writing on art was drawn from lectures to a group of educators brought together with the specific task of jointly creating a “philosophy of education,”¹⁹ and in fact, education is one of the fields with which theology most intersects.²⁰ All of which provokes a fundamental question: Drawing from the fact that

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17. Maeve L. Heaney, “Musical Space: Living ‘in-between’ the Artistic and Christian Callings,” in Tom Beaudoin, ed., *Secular Music and Sacred Theology* (Collegeville, MN: Liturgical, 2013).
 18. For example, the first and groundbreaking work of Jeremy Begbie, *Theology, Music and Time* (Cambridge: Cambridge University, 1997).
 19. Bernard Lonergan, “Art,” in Frederick E. Crowe and Robert M. Doran, eds., *Collected Works of Bernard Lonergan, Vol. 10: Topics in Education* (Toronto: University of Toronto, 1993) 208–32 (hereafter cited in text as “Art”); Robert M. Doran, preface to *Collected Works of Bernard Lonergan, Vol. 10: Topics in Education* xi–xix at xii.
 20. On what is perhaps a personal note but I doubt a coincidental one, not only do I find myself being asked ever-more frequently to speak about music’s spiritual, theological, and formational value to educators, but invitations come accompanied by the explicit request to include performed music in the presentations. My observation of and reflection on these experiences has led me to conclude that the role of music therein is not simply that of an

music played, performed, and listened to enriches our thinking in general, how do we introduce music into theological thought in particular? It may not be indispensable to interact with the aesthetic and/or artistic patterns of consciousness every time we reflect on them, but in order to grasp the role of music in theology we ask how theology can benefit from increased interaction with those patterns of consciousness to which music and other art forms and practices grant us access.²¹ I have made the choice here to stick to words, if only because it seems necessary to lay a foundation, prepare the terrain, for the actual use of music in theology.

In order to prepare this terrain, I present aspects of Lonergan's thought that are useful in addressing the questions identified above: specifically, the place of beauty, art, aesthetics, and music (what is said and not said) within his overall epistemological framework, as well as an audacious but underdeveloped insight into the polymorphic nature of human experience and consciousness by which human beings approach and make sense of reality. I then compare these ideas with theories of music drawn from musical semiotics and neuroscience. Finally, I ask what theology could become if music were to be brought into theological method.

Lonergan on Beauty

Lonergan rarely addresses the theme of beauty²² apart from describing it as "self-transcendence expressed through the sensible,"²³ but his overall approach is significant. His main contribution may be his posing of epistemology as a condition for any abstract or metaphysical notion of beauty: "the dependence of metaphysical terms on

entertainment break to allow space for assimilation, nor a sort of superficial proof-texting the argument on offer, but rather that it is intrinsic to their understanding. It opens a space (in myself as well as those listening) in which what is being said can be savored, felt, or at least tested out. The cost of including music, in terms of preparation, practice, and set-up, as well as the shift of consciousness needed to move between theoretical explanation and artistic performance in one setting, cannot be treated here. suffice it to note that the presence of music seems to be fruitful and even essential to the outcome and success of these presentations. It is worth mentioning, also based on personal experience, that including music in strictly theological forums is even more challenging.

21. The question is one aspect of the wider question addressed by Gerard Walmsley, *Lonergan on Philosophical Pluralism: The Polymorphism of Consciousness as the Key to Philosophy* (Toronto: University of Toronto, 2008).
22. This section of the article draws from the work of Richard Viladesau, *Theological Aesthetics: God in Imagination, Beauty, and Art* (New York: Oxford University, 1999), and Viladesau, *Theology and the Arts: Encountering God through Music, Art and Rhetoric* (New York: Paulist, 2000); and Dadosky, *The Eclipse and Recovery of Beauty*, which gathers and synthesizes many years' work exploring the theme of Lonergan's philosophical approach to beauty by the author himself and that of colleagues active in developing and applying Lonergan's methodology.
23. Dadosky, *Recovery of Beauty* 177, quoting Lonergan, "Method in Theology Lectures, Q&A" (unpublished manuscript, Regis College, 1969).

a prior cognitional theory.”²⁴ Instead of treating the traditional concept of beauty as a “transcendental,” as does Balthasar, Lonergan unfolds it through a threefold dynamic whose point of arrival is beauty as a transcendental concept. He distinguishes between transcendental *notions*, which are those spontaneous operative heuristic anticipations that push us to know; transcendental *precepts*, which actualize the notions “be attentive, be intelligent, be reasonable, be responsible, be-in-love!”; and transcendental *concepts*, which correspond to the transcendentals as theology traditionally understands them when the goals of these imperatives are reached. In this light, beauty is the implicit notion that impels us to be attentive in a deeper way to concrete reality in order to apprehend the concept or transcendental that is beauty. John Dadosky’s work on Lonergan’s philosophy of beauty takes up the same question: whether beauty can be considered a transcendental notion of being, together with the other three (unity, truth, and goodness). Dadosky draws on Aquinas’s categories of beauty—clarity, harmony (or proportion), and integrity (or wholeness)—and Aquinas’s position on beauty as pertaining to formal causality (in comparison to the good which pertains to final causality).²⁵ He concludes that in Lonergan’s framework, beauty is a “different kind of transcendental,”²⁶ intrinsically related to “the good,” albeit separated by the kind of causality they are moved by (formal and final, respectively). Beauty is distinct in that it carries with it in addition the marks of “harmony, unity, clarity of the true and the valuable,” and the corresponding pleasure that results from contemplating “the surplus or the ulterior significance of the object, and how it captivates the whole person in the encounter.”²⁷ Furthermore, he identifies an underlying aesthetic component to the human drive or impulse to experience and knowledge that he calls a “quasi-operator.”²⁸

24. This insight and the explanation following it on the categories of notion, precept, and concept are presented in Viladesau, *Theological Aesthetics* 129–34.

25. Lonergan builds on Aquinas in his entire edifice, and Dadosky’s exploration into his philosophy of beauty does the same, guided by various interpreters who address the theme. One of the fundamental distinctions Aquinas made about beauty was in relation to the type of causality underlying its perception. Aquinas (and Aristotle) spoke of four causes: material, formal, efficient, and final. Two are brought to bear when comparing and contrasting causality involved in human intending to the good and the beautiful: while the good is the object of our desire, the term of an appetite as an end or goal (final causality), the beautiful is an intelligible form, appealing to the eye or the intellect (formal causality). See Dadosky, *Recovery of Beauty* 32–46. This leads him to speak of beauty in terms of disinterested perception, to contemplate but not possess, which can be found also in Lonergan as well in terms of his oft-repeated description in *Insight* of the “detached, disinterested desire to know.”

26. Dadosky, *Recovery of Beauty* 53, 177.

27. *Ibid.* 177.

28. The notions of “operator” and “operations” are important in Lonergan’s terminology. “Operator” is used to speak of the self-appropriating subject in its intending operations (*Lonergan Method* 7–13) as well as to refer to the basic desires of human living that impel our activities: the desire to know, for the good, for happiness, and for immortality. In this direction, Lonergan mentions the notion of a “quasi-operator” which seems to intend or

This manifests itself in a twofold desire to contemplate and to create beauty, which in turn underpins our aesthetic and artistic patterns of existence, respectively.

These converging interpretations of the link between our impulse to know, and what our experience of beauty is, are significant for the role of the arts in our apprehension of being and of the divine. They open a space for reflection both on the underlying anthropology sustaining our understanding of human interaction and knowledge of reality, and on the specifics of each art form. They compel us to look at music's particularity and what it adds to the conversation, as attentiveness to the concrete way in which music works in human experience should inform how theology speaks of it. They also clearly differentiate between reception and creation in the aesthetic domain, which goes to the core of one of the main aims of this study: the patterns of experience at work in theological creativity.²⁹

Lonergan on Art, Aesthetics, and Music

As we move to explore Lonergan's writing on art, aestheticism, and music, two interpretative keys are helpful. The first is the place of art and artistic activity in his epistemology, which identifies four levels of consciousness in the process of coming to know—experience, understanding, judgment, and decision—that come to their fulfillment in the ultimate “falling in love” with being.³⁰ Lonergan situates art on the first level of consciousness, that of experience, the role of which is to explore and enrich human experience *before* the mind moves on to the next steps of understanding, judging, and acting on what we have experienced. This fact makes attentiveness to the artistic experience central. The second key revolves around his notion of the polymorphic nature of human consciousness.³¹ Lonergan identifies various patterns of experience, or

desire the beautiful, “to create and contemplate beauty,” or at least allow for “an aesthetic component to the unrestricted desire to know.” Dadosky, *Recovery of Beauty* 111, 182. He takes this term from Lonergan, “Mission and the Spirit,” in *A Third Collection: Papers by Bernard J. F. Lonergan*, ed. F. E. Crowe (Mahwah, NY: Paulist, 1985) 23–34 at 30, although recognizing that Lonergan speaks of a symbolic operator or *élan vital* in similar terms elsewhere. Doran, in *Theology and the Dialectics of History* (Toronto: University of Toronto, 1990) 663–64, develops the notion in terms of a “psychic operator” or “aesthetic-dramatic operator.”

29. The importance of this underdeveloped insight is beginning to inform philosophical and theological reflection. Walmsley, *Lonergan on Philosophical Pluralism* makes a comprehensive case for its development; and as an example of its application, cf. James R. Pambrun's recent use of the notion to clarify issues of method and hermeneutics in Catholic theology: “Conflict in Current Roman Catholic Systematic Theology: A Diagnosis and Response,” *Theological Studies* 76 (2015), doi:10.1177/0040563915593468.
30. Some interpreters speak of five levels of consciousness, depending on whether the fifth is seen as culmination of the fourth or a further step, but the analysis is the same.
31. Lonergan, *Insight: A Study of Human Understanding*, ed. F. E. Crowe and R. M. Doran, *Collected Works of Bernard Lonergan S.J.* (Toronto: University of Toronto, 1992) 3: 452 (hereafter cited in the main text as *Insight*).

awareness—ways in which human beings interact with and make sense of the world. Each of these patterns follows the levels of consciousness unfolding from experience into understanding, judgment, and decision regarding if, and how, to act, but each in and according to its own pattern.³² He identifies common sense/practical, biological, intellectual/theoretical, aesthetic, artistic, dramatic, mystical and religious patterns, of which the aesthetic and artistic are our focus here (*Insight* 207–9). A brief overview of his thought in chronological order helps situate the main themes, after which we will lay them out thematically so as to draw out the implications for theology.

Loneragan speaks of art and aesthetics explicitly in three moments: *Insight* (1957),³³ *Topics in Education* (1959),³⁴ and *Method in Theology* (1972).³⁵

In chapter 6 of *Insight* (207–9), he speaks of the aesthetic pattern of experience, situating it between the biological and the intellectual patterns and describing it as evoking an “exuberance” and “delight,” a source of liberating, spontaneous, “self-justifying” joy, through which we are led to speak of “experience for the sake of experience.” Without limiting the source of this experience to art, art is identified as having the potential and in fact role of liberating the process of human knowing in two directions: from the pull of biological needs on the one hand, and the constraints of intelligence in its practical, common-sense, or intellectual patterns of experience on the other. The aesthetic pattern of experience is described as a symbolic one, in which what is symbolized is obscure (post-biological and pre-scientific). It invites to participation rather than explanation, “straining for truth and value without defining them,” and is open to communicating “subtly” rather than to giving definitive or absolute answers. This bond of art with freedom, and in particular freedom of consciousness, is found in all of Lonergan’s writings on art,³⁶ and although he does not explicitly develop here what he names in chapter 14 as the artistic pattern of experience,³⁷ he speaks of the artistic activity briefly but in similar terms in all three writings. In *Insight*, for example, artistic creativity is described as “the exercise of intelligence in discovering ever novel forms that unify and relate the contents and acts of aesthetic experience” through “skillful embodiment in colours and shapes, sounds and movements” (*Insight* 208). He does not, however, develop the point at this stage, limiting himself to suggest what would be addressed slightly more in later writings: that as “an expression of the subject, art would show forth that wonder in its elemental sweep” (*ibid.*).

32. For example, how we are attentive to minding a child (common sense) will not be the same as that of a surgeon operating on one. Even within each art form, one would expect attentiveness and intelligence to be different.

33. Lonergan, *Insight*, chaps. 6, 14.

34. Bernard Lonergan, “Art.” This chapter on art was one of the Cincinnati Lectures given in 1959, transcribed and published in 1993.

35. Bernard Lonergan, *Method in Theology* (New York: Seabury, 1972) chap. 3 (hereafter cited in the main text as *Method*).

36. Lonergan, *Insight* 410; Glenn Hughes, “Lonergan and Art,” *Revista Portuguesa de Filosofia* 63 (2007), <http://www.jstor.org/stable/40338245>.

37. As pointed out by Walmsley, *Loneragan on Philosophical Pluralism* 126.

The article “Art” in *Topics in Education* is by far Lonergan’s most extensive treatment of the theme, and the only one in which he attempts to differentiate the role of the various art forms. It is here we find his definition of art. Influenced by Susanne Langer³⁸ and those before her who viewed the role of art as expressive of meaning, rather than imitative or communicative of beauty,³⁹ Lonergan defines art as “an objectification of a purely experiential pattern” (“Art” 210), where the emphasis is on the pattern being purely experiential, elemental, without interpretations or objectifications alien to it, and excluding any instrumentalization of experience. Art invites participation and provokes a release of meaning which is, however, elemental meaning (ibid. 215), that is to say, meaning in which subject and object are not yet differentiated. The transformative power of art lies in that. Situated in experience, the first level of Lonergan’s structure of intentional consciousness, it liberates the person from the dynamic of responsible inquiry, removing him or her from the ordinary everyday patterns of living, so as to explore the possibilities of what life, ordinary living, can be: “experience for the sake of experience at the service of everyday living” (ibid. 217). Interestingly, he identifies the freedom of consciousness that art can effect as fruitful in counteracting philosophy’s restrictive impact on human thought and life:

What I want to communicate in this talk about art is the notion that art is relevant to concrete living, that it is an exploration of the potentialities of concrete living. That exploration is extremely important in our age, when philosophers for at least two centuries, through doctrines on politics, economics, education, and through even further doctrines, have been trying to remake man, and have done not a little to make life unlivable. The great task that is demanded if we are to make it livable again is the re-creation of the liberty of the subject, the recognition of the freedom of consciousness. (ibid. 232)

This writing on art in topics of education is one of the rare places in which Lonergan speaks explicitly of beauty, and he expresses it in terms of splendor, glory, majesty—the “plus” in things that can be overlooked, but which the symbolic potential of art, can, according to Lonergan, “present” as “ulterior significance,” at least as a possibility (ibid. 222). He speaks again briefly of the artist as one who “beholds, inspects, dissects, enjoys and repeats” the patterns of experience in order to “objectify, unfold and make it explicit” in a work of art (ibid. 217–21), abstracting the form, not conceptually but by doing—“*poiesis*” (ibid. 219). He introduces the notion of the “psychic distance” that the artist needs, so as to “separate” and “recollect in tranquility” the experience, making art different to spontaneous or symptomatic expression, “truer than experience,” open to multiple meanings or interpretations without proving any of them. Finally, he reflects briefly on the various art forms of the picture, the statue, architecture, and music, to which I will return shortly.

38. Susanne Langer, *Feeling and Form: A Theory of Art Developed from Philosophy in a New Key* (New York: Scribner, 1953).

39. For a summary of those influences see Dadosky, *The Eclipse and Recovery of Beauty* 184–89.

In *Method in Theology*, Lonergan focuses in chapter 3 on meaning in art, repeating his definition of art as “the objectification of a purely experiential pattern” (*Method* 61), and his insistence that the significance of art is one of *elemental* meaning, and as such, art leads to “a transformed subject in [her] transformed world” (63). He once again emphasizes the work and role of the artist in terms similar to those found in *Topics in Education*. To summarize all of this thematically, we could organize Lonergan’s thought on art under three sections or topics: art, the aesthetic pattern of experience in the reception of art, and the artistic pattern of experience in the creating or making of art as seen in Figure 1.

Art
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • An objectification of a purely experiential pattern • Relevant to concrete living: re-creation of the liberty of the subject
The aesthetic pattern of experience
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Pattern of elemental meaning (subject and object not yet differentiated) • No instrumentalization of experience: experience for the sake of experience • Liberating/ freedom of consciousness in two directions: biological and intelligible • Transformative (distortive) – provoking a release of (elemental) meaning • Symbolic; invites to participation, with the potential to present...ulterior significance
The artistic pattern of experience
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The exercise of intelligence in discovering ever novel forms that unify and relate the contents and acts of aesthetic experience • Skilful embodiment in colours and shapes, sounds and movements • Beholding, inspecting, dissecting, enjoying and repeating the patterns of experience in order to objectify, unfold and make it explicit it in a work of art • Abstracting the form, not conceptually but by doing – <i>poiesis</i> • Artists’ need for psychic distance • Different to spontaneous or symptomatic expression – truer than experience

Figure 1. Lonergan on Art and the Aesthetic and Artistic Patterns of Experience.

And what of music? While Lonergan situates the effect of each of the various art forms in the realm, or level, of experience, he does not fully develop their particularities. He frequently uses musical images or metaphors to exemplify what he is expressing about art, but they do not reflect a thorough or developed understanding of how music works. Even the brief presentation of each art form in *Topics of Education* cannot be considered exhaustive in presenting their effect on the human process of knowing. That being said, the differences identified are interesting to note. Whereas visual art, sculpture, and architecture are concerned with space (“Art” 223–27), Lonergan talks about music in relation to temporality, calling it “the image of experienced time” (*ibid.* 227) and underlining its *movement* as something internal to that symbolic form, both within the music itself, and that of the movement from one note to another. He relates it to Aquinas’ thought on eternity and time: “Eternity is the ‘now’ that has no change, the ‘now’ of a being that does not change; and time is the ‘now’ of a being that does change” (*ibid.*).

While its relationship to time is an obvious element of musical symbolism, there is more to be said. Why, if music is nonspatial, can it “fill a room,” and affect the

way we experience and inhabit it? Is the now of eternity really unchanging and can such a dynamic art form as music reveal anything about the nonstatic nature of being and reality? How can we understand music's link to dance and its implications for the appropriation of human embodiment?⁴⁰ These are just some of the questions that can lead us to ask, what is the specific contribution of music, not only to the enrichment of human life that all art helps facilitate, but as a consequence, to theological inquiry?

Music: An “Operational” Symbolic Form

Nowhere in his work on art does Lonergan explore the differences between the aesthetic and artistic patterns for any particular art form.⁴¹ Yet no art form requires attention to this difference as much as music, precisely because it does not exist as static in time, the composer or performer separable from the listener's perception and reception of the piece.⁴² Every performance is, in a sense, its own unique piece of music, making it both more complex and potentially powerful, in terms of causality.⁴³ Given this particular nature of music, I introduce here some of the specific ways in which music works or is operational upon human consciousness. The term “operational” is taken from Italian theologian and musician Pierangelo Sequeri, who speaks of the *operatività*—the operational nature of music: “there is a dimension of the symbolic, which human beings more typically live from, which has instead the form of action . . . it does not produce objects, it transforms subjects.”⁴⁴ Sequeri's operative concept is reflected

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40. We cannot enter fully into the theme here, but music's link with movement and dance is arguably closer than with any other art form. Its presence in Charismatic and Pentecostal worship, or liturgical dance comes to mind, but not only. Some professional singers seem to match and aid their vocal jumps with hand movements, and even the more classical forms of musical performance are impossible without some corporal movement.
41. Dadosky situates these two patterns on the fourth level of intentionality analysis (decision), distinguishing between the “action” in the reception of beauty (Aquinas' “complacency”—*via receptionis*) that constitutes the aesthetic pattern of existence and that is involved in the active one, expressed in the artistic pattern of existence.
42. The musician is also receiving and reacting to the piece of music while playing, although the dynamic is different to that of the initial composition.
43. The “perfection” possible in contemporary recorded music production draws our attention away from this fact, but there is growing interest in performance studies that highlight the distinction. Some areas of theology need this attention, such as liturgy, for example, in which the music is always live, for better or worse.
44. Pierangelo Sequeri, *Estro di Dio, Saggi di Estetica* (Milano: Glossa, 2000) 176–77 (translation mine). See also n. 28, *supra*. Sequeri has worked in collaboration with medical experts for years in music therapy initiatives for autistic children. The recognition that there is a specific type of symbolic action in music is important, and growth in understanding of it will help us move away from the all too frequent generalizations about the arts found in theological discourse, as if all the arts functioned in the same way, which they do not.

in Lonergan's terminology and framework in the attentiveness required to grasp, reflect, and then act upon how music—in both its reception and composition or production—is experienced and operates, moving from experience to an understanding of its significance for Christian faith and theological discourse. Without asking how music operates, the theologian might come to music uncritically, unable to imagine how it might work as a dimension of theological method.

The disciplines of musicology, ethnomusicology, music theory, musical semiotics, performance studies, and neuroscience shed much light on how music affects us,⁴⁵ and various forums exploring that intersection have emerged in recent years, focusing on the operational nature of music.⁴⁶ (Theology has often tended to simply make statements about music in Christian thought, sometimes offering examples but without interacting with this scholarship.) I address the operational nature of music here, drawing on studies in the fields of musical semiotics and neuroscience.⁴⁷ To a certain degree, both these fields address the effect of musical creativity and its reception on human experience.

Musical semiotics explores the principles of musical symbolism in dialogue and contrast with those of the spoken word. It finds that the practice of musical communication has a variety of dynamics that differ from verbal or conceptual

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45. Forerunners in the field of musicology and ethnomusicology can be found in 20th-century authors such as Susanne Langer, Leonard B. Meyer, Alan P. Merriam, Charles Seeger, Bruno Nettl, and John Blacking. In particular, Charles Seeger's writings gathered in *Studies in Musicology I: 1935–1975* (Berkeley: University of California, 1977) and *Studies in Musicology II: 1929–1979* (Berkeley: University of California, 1994) are groundbreaking and ask many of the foundational questions with which theology intersects. For an overview of its history, see Bruno Nettl, *The Study of Ethnomusicology: Twenty-Nine Issues and Concepts* (Urbana: University of Illinois, 1983), updated in Bruno Nettl and Phillip Bohlmann, *Comparative Musicology and Anthropology of Music: Essays on the History of Ethnomusicology* (Chicago: University of Chicago, 1991). The University of California's *Journal of Musicology* continues that research. For a recent perspective on the theme and its intersection with some of the points this article suggests theology needs to address, Lawrence Kramer's position is interesting: *Interpreting Music* (Berkeley: University of California, 2010).
46. For example, Musictheology, is a networking and research initiative born of collaboration between the faculties of theology and music at Durham University, <https://www.dur.ac.uk/musictheology>, which has led to various international conferences on the theme, such as the 2014 conference on Music, Theology and Justice at the University of Toronto in October of 2014. The Yale Institute for Sacred Music also organized a think-tank gathering for theologians, musicians and musicologists in February 2013, leading to the recently initiated *Yale Journal of Music and Religion*, <http://elischolar.library.yale.edu/yjmr>. Also, see the Society for Christian Scholarship in Music: <http://www.scsmusic.org>.
47. There are insights to be drawn as well from the fields of musicology and ethnomusicology, but within the specific paradigm of Lonergan's stance on art's contribution to the process of human knowing, these disciplines seemed particularly relevant.

communication,⁴⁸ such as its emphasis on the *act of sharing*, over and above the sending and receiving of a given message, which tends to define “successful” verbal communication; and the kinesthetic nature of music, which emphasizes and provokes movement over and above intellectual understanding. Another aspect is the *embodied* nature of musical communication, which could be said to have links with what Lonergan identifies as the *nunc* (“Art” 227), the now of music in time. The French school of semiotics speaks of how verbal communication works in terms of *disengagement*: words disengage, or distance us from the space and place we inhabit, the “I–here–now” reality within which we exist and experience things and ourselves, in order to refer to, grasp, and name what we are living or experiencing. In music, however, engagement is more easily explained as it is lived corporeally: our bodily presence or existence in the present moment and space within which we find ourselves. “The human body, being the place where we can confirm who is I, where is here and when is now, is moved immediately by the movement of music.”⁴⁹ The spatial nature of musical aesthetics, therefore, complements its time-related dynamism, since it also affects and changes how we experience the spaces we inhabit and move through—perhaps especially where music is performed live, but not solely. Furthermore, the dynamic, orientational, and intervallic nature of how music operates contrasts with language whose function of naming and identifying makes it work in terms of more static, image-related oppositions.⁵⁰ “Each tone is a harmony . . . each duration is a

48. There are two general approaches to semiotics: the French school of semiotics building on the work of Ferdinand de Saussure, and the Peircean approach, based on the work of Charles Sanders Peirce. Both explore the specifics of music from a different understanding of the sign. The aspects this article draws on are from the musical semiotics of musicologist Willem Marie Speelman, situated in the former approach. For a more comprehensive explanation, see Maeve L. Heaney, *Music as Theology: What Music Says about the Word* (Eugene, OR: Pickwick, 2012) 103–34.

49. Willem M. Speelman, “Woorden kunnen worden verstaan, muziek moet worden gevolgd. Taal en muziek als fundamentele categorieën van de liturgie,” in *Elke muziek heeft haar hemel: De religieuze betekenis van muziek*, ed. M. Hoondert (Budel: Damon, 2009) 161–83. This chapter was developed from a conference at Notre Dame, entitled “Words Can Be Understood, but Music Must Be Followed. Language and Music as Fundamental Categories of Liturgy,” *The Conference: Singing God’s Love Faithfully*, Notre Dame, April 12–14, 2007 (hereafter cited in the main text as “Language and Music”). A shorter version in English can be found in Willem M. Speelman, “Music and the Word: Two Pillars of the Liturgy,” *GIA Quarterly* 19 (2008) 14–15, 44–45.

50. Drawing on Ferdinand de Saussure’s notion of binary oppositions and Algirdas Julien Greimas’s work on Aristotle’s “square of oppositions.” One of the grounds upon which Speelman bases this affirmation is that of the phoneme as an acoustical image in our brain, rather than a sound, leading to the formation of the cerebral images of concepts or ideas. Whether or not one fully accepts this stance, the nonreferential nature of musical expression in comparison to how language refers to and represents, still holds. We understand words against one another, whereas music, at all levels, in harmony and melody, is grasped through the relationships of the notes with one another and not clearly in relation to anything outside itself.

rhythm and each intensity is a dynamic” (“Language and Music” 7). Music harmonizes rather than differentiates (even when that supposed harmony is dissonant) as each musical note exists and makes sense only in relation to other notes—the ones that follow it in melody or accompany it in harmony—a profoundly different and perhaps complementary function to the critical power of words to identify and define.

While any one aspect of this analysis could be contested or nuanced, current research into the effect of music on the brain supports its overall approach and introduces further insights. Recent explorations by neuroscience⁵¹ into music’s place in how the brain functions accentuate connections between music-making biology, health, and human sexuality; the relationship between auditory and motor system as seen in musical rhythm; its capacity to organize pitch and rhythm in ways that speech does not; and music-making’s effect on the brain’s learning capacity (experience-dependent plasticity).⁵² The affective resonance of music is a constant, its “deeper power over emotions than ordinary speech.”⁵³ Even when seeking the similarities (as opposed to the differences) between language and music, music’s lack of specificity in semantic meaning is maintained, remaining “suggestive of concepts” rather than containing specific content.⁵⁴ The affective, embodied, and kinesthetic dimensions of musical symbolism are constant. Figure 2 below seeks to identify convergences between these two fields, rather than an exact identification of findings, but they are unmistakable.

Dynamics of Musical Semiotics	Music and the Brain
Act of sharing – rather than delivery of a message	Music’s lack of specificity in semantic meaning
Kinaesthetic – movement over understanding	Effect on the brain’s learning capacity (experience dependent plasticity)
Dynamic– orientational - intervallic	Musical rhythm: relationship between auditory and motor systems
Corporality – “engagement” with the “I-here-now”	Music-making connected with biology, health and human sexuality
Harmonic - spatial	Affective resonance of music

Figure 2. Insights into Music from Musical Semiotics and Neuroscience.

51. While neuroscientific studies on music are in their beginnings, they are an increasingly consistent source for musicological studies in recent years. It is their focus on the effect of music on the human mind that makes them relevant and of interest to this article.
52. By way of example, Rose Clifford, ed., *Neurology of Music* (London: Imperial College, 2010); Aniruddh D. Patel, *Music, Language, and the Brain* (New York: Oxford University, 2007); Isabelle Peretz and Robert J. Zattore, eds., *The Cognitive Neuroscience of Music* (New York: Oxford University, 2003).
53. Patel, *Music, Language, and the Brain* 4.
54. Ibid. 327–28. Underlying these observations is the debate on musical meaning, which covers the full spectrum ranging from those who say music is not meaningful, or rather, completely “devoid of referential power,” to those who recognize the complex and contextual nature of meaning. That music “means” does not seem to be in question in theological discourse—the issue being more how we grasp and interpret that meaning.

While an exploration of the implications of even this short list of characteristics exceeds my scope here, it demonstrates that music provokes a different experience of or relationship to reality than words and concepts do, presumably leading to a distinct or at least enriched form of knowing.⁵⁵ I would argue that this applies both to the aesthetic pattern of existence and the artistic one and that the work of the musician is repeating, retasting, and reexpressing musical form, rather than taking distance from it, as Lonergan suggests in his otherwise insightful description of the artistic creative process.

Music in Theological Method

I now return to the questions with which we started about the possibility of a greater and more fruitful integration of music into theological work: What can we say about music's place and role in theological meaning-making and method? And what does it offer or add to current studies in theological and philosophical aesthetics? To sketch an answer, we will address the issue of music's place within Lonergan's epistemology and theological method, followed by some suggestions on the potential role of the reception of music in theological aesthetics, and that of the artistic pattern of musical experience in theological creativity.

Music in Lonergan's Epistemology and Method

The basis for any movement towards integrating music into theology lies in our grasping that, up to now, the lion's share of theological thought has unfolded in the theoretical pattern of experience.⁵⁶ This is so obvious that it can be hard to think of theological

55. By way of example, an interesting study on the links between kinesiology and music in religious studies proposes that in our embodied knowing, there are four ways (overlapping and interrelated) in which the physical and neuromuscular perception of our bodies expresses itself and knows. This study relates these to four musical styles, which are described as *thrust*, *shape*, *swing*, and *hang*. The study proposes that each of these is suggestive of a different image and experience of the divine: transformational, eternal/transcendent, resilient, God "of hope" in the face of oppression, and an immanent, present divine at the core of the person/community's being. While the contextual nature of these interpretations is to be assumed, for our purposes in underlining the embodied nature of musical meaning, they are important in their own right. Marcia McFee, "Primal Patterns: Towards a Kinesthetic Hermeneutic," *Proceedings of the North American Academy of Liturgy* (2009) 136–57. Her article is based on the emerging field of kinesiology, the scientific study of human movement and applies work pioneered by Josephine Rathbone, Valerie Hunt, and Sally Fitt.

56. In the awareness of the complexity and multilayered understanding of the term, I will simply situate it here with in Lonergan's understanding. For Lonergan, experience (external and/or internal), constitutes the first part of the fourfold process of knowledge. Therefore, while for most people experience is a form of knowledge, for him is it an infrastructure of

reflection in any other form. But accepting that the theoretical pattern is but one of other possible approaches, and asking the question about if and how that could be changed or enriched in the case of music, is a necessary first step. Lonergan speaks of three stages of meaning in the history of (Western) culture: common sense, theory, and interiority. Theory was and will always remain an essential part of the process. We cannot amputate ourselves from the past and there will always be a need for theoretical analysis, to be gathered up and integrated in new ways as how we make sense of things changes. But a theoretical analysis is not enough. It must find an expressive form that can carry theological meaning expressed in theoretical terms into the emerging stage of meaning—interiority, in Lonergan’s terms—that is our current one. One way this can be accomplished is through the symbolic dimensions of each art form. So where does music fit in Lonergan’s methodology?

Using Lonergan’s theological method as a framework, we can situate music at two levels of intentionality analysis: experience, together with all artistic activity, as well as in the movement from judgment to decision, as shown in Figure 3. The reasons for placing music at these two points of his intentionality analysis are several: All art,

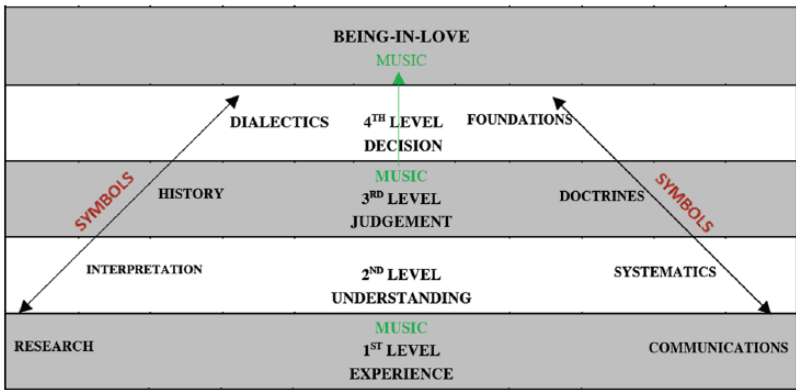


Figure 3. Music as Theology within Lonergan’s Theological Method.
 Source: Heaney, *Music as Theology* 170. Used with permission from Wipf and Stock Publishers.

knowledge. He fits in with the line of Anglo-American thinkers that challenge the original notion of experience as that of objects, or self as object, to that of our experiencing ourselves. See Raymond Maloney, “The Person as Subject of Spirituality in the Writings of Bernard Lonergan,” *Milltown Studies* 45 (2000) 66–80 at 74. This explains why he rarely speaks of experience of God (“we have no data on God”) but rather experience of the divine or of grace. However, this does not take away from its importance. An accurate understanding of how human beings experience and know the world around them, which he describes as critical realism, is essential to theology, and he identifies religious experience—specifically of conversion—as the foundation of theological method in the cultural changes facing the theological task.

according to Lonergan, is mainly situated in the experiential level of consciousness, with the role of freeing and expanding human awareness. But the affective and kinaesthetic nature of musical symbolism aids in the movement from understanding and judgment to action. Music has a role to play in facilitating aspects of conversion (level four)—in particular those of intellectual and psychic conversion⁵⁷—precisely because it helps us access, first and foremost, our own symbolic system.⁵⁸

Dadosky's work on beauty also looks at its role at each level of intentionality analysis—and while it does not explicitly address music, or in fact art as a whole, it allows us to reflect on how music could work at each stage of intentionality analysis. Level one explores the aesthetic pattern of experience in Lonergan's work along the lines of what has been described above (freedom from instrumentality, elemental meaning, presenting ulterior significance, and surplus of meaning) with the potential to be transformative (or distortive). Level two describes the formal intelligibility of beauty as "of the intelligible unity/species in the data or of relations among the perceived data," identifying it with Aquinas's insights into beauty's properties of *claritas*, *consonantia*, and *integritas*. Judgments of beauty (levels two and three) are where much of the difficulty lies in theological aesthetics (and were one of Balthasar's overriding concerns), for it is there that the difficult issue of judgments of style or taste and their relationship to truth and beauty as ontological categories is played out. Dadosky addresses this by unfolding the two aspects of judgment identified by Lonergan: judgments of fact (third level of intentionality analysis) and judgments of value (fourth level of intentionality analysis), without confusing them in the recognition that between the two lies our apprehension of value through feelings. In this context, aesthetic value is described as "the realization of the intelligible in the sensible,"⁵⁹ which relates to Lonergan's few mentions of beauty as "self-transcendence expressed through the sensible" affecting

57. Psychic conversion is a notion introduced into the Lonergan framework of theology by Robert Doran to complement and develop the three types of conversion identified by Lonergan, the need for which Lonergan himself recognized during his lifetime. It relates to the healing of our sensitive consciousness, the affective aesthetic undertow of our spiritual being, and touches on aspects of the human experience such as affectivity, symbolic perception, and intuition. The first book in which Doran dealt with this theme in relation to the human sciences is *Psychic Conversion and Theological Foundations: Toward a Reorientation of the Human Sciences* (Ann Arbor, MI: Scholars, 1981). For its presentation in relation to theology, see Doran, *Theology and the Dialectics of History* 8–9, as well as chaps. 2, 6, and 7.

58. The growing use of music in music therapy initiatives corroborates this intuition, but the danger lies in limiting it to a mere application of music's meaning, outside the realm of theological discourse proper, due to our continuing logo-centric understanding of meaningful symbolic communication. This is a potentially fruitful area of exploration for the future, in relation to all four conversions. The importance of music in Pentecostal worship speaks to its role in religious conversion, and music's affective resonance helps us attend to the affective dimension involved in moral conversion.

59. Dadosky, *Recovery of Beauty* 159.

the whole person. Level four is where he differentiates between the action in the reception of beauty (Aquinas's "complacency"—*via receptionis*) which constitutes the aesthetic pattern of existence, and the active one, expressed in the artistic pattern of existence and intrinsically related to the dramatic pattern of existence.⁶⁰

In applying Dadosky's detailed description of beauty within Lonergan's framework to music, the nature of how music works in human experience requires us to reassess both the language used when we speak of the arts and perhaps also how final and formal causality are related to beauty and the good as well as our underlying anthropology. Despite the frequency of musical examples employed whenever art and beauty are the subjects, the language used by theology often accentuates a visual understanding of the same.⁶¹ While Lonergan describes "experiential" and "elemental meaning" as "of the seen as seen, of the heard as heard, of the felt as felt," still beauty is mostly referred to in terms of "sight," even to the point that "seeing" or "perceiving" differentiates contemplation (of beauty) from enjoyment (of that which may be agreeable or disagreeable). Recognizing that Lonergan was deeply influenced by Aquinas, Dadosky quotes: "Goodness properly relates to the appetite (goodness being what all things desire); and therefore it has the aspect of an end (the appetite being a kind of movement towards a thing). On the other hand, beauty relates to the cognitive faculty; for beautiful things are those which please when seen."⁶² Aquinas goes on to present a balanced position on beauty as delight in proportioned knowledge and the senses as the entry point for all knowledge. But the dilemma remains. Our language in this field tends to speak of all art in analogous terms, with the cognitive characteristics of sight implicitly presented as a qualitatively different (and/or superior) sense. This does not represent music's mode of operation or its effect on our embodied existence. Music moves us, at times in ways that nothing else can; does it not, at some level, satisfy us? If music appeals to the appetite as well as to cognition, is that a lesser quality, and what form of causality is at work there? I would suggest that there is a case for touch and taste (as well as hearing) in our "felt as felt" experience of music, and that music invites us to revisit some of the terminology with which we talk about beauty and desire. It could even help us reflect upon the implicit anthropology we work out of in our reactions to and taste in music. Darwin linked music to

60. Lonergan names, but does not develop this pattern much. He mentions it in *Insight*: "The first work of art is our own living" (*Insight* 207–10); in *Topics in Education*: "The dramatic pattern of experience is the pattern of ordinary living in the concrete world" (*Topics in Education* 188); and once in *Method* (*Method* 286). He seems to relate it to the notion of human freedom and our involvement how we create our lives. Doran develops the notion further in *Theology and the Dialectics of History* 71, and Dadosky draws out its connections with the artistic pattern of experience in Dadosky, *Recovery of Beauty* chaps. 4, 5, and 8.

61. Even the comparison of the patterns of music as an aural phenomenon and the patterns of music on a page, which Lonergan uses in both "Art" and *Method*, do not really translate into an appreciation of the difference that the "reading" of those patterns evokes in the human body and psyche.

62. *Summa Theologiae* 1, q. 5, a. 4 ad 1; quoted in Dadosky, *Recovery of Beauty* 176.

sexuality,⁶³ Freud is reputed to have despised all music as an unwelcome intrusion,⁶⁴ and contemporary neuroscience has also made the link between music and sexuality as well as other areas of human corporality.⁶⁵ Once again, the significance of psychic conversion in theological aesthetics is apparent.

Music may also invite us to integrate or include within our understanding of beauty the notion of the sublime, which Dadosky suggests may be situated along a continuum of embodied perception: the sublime “concerns the degree to which the aesthetic experience and biological patterns are blended.”⁶⁶ Neuroscience identifies music as the art form that most frequently provokes the physiological response known as “chills” or “shivers down the spine.”⁶⁷ While these are two distinct reactions, it is one more manifestation of the embodied nature of the musical art form.

A full integration of music into theological method according to the approach outlined above would imply both looking at the process of intentionality analysis in aesthetic and artistic patterns of experience, as well as music’s place in theological method as a whole, precisely within each of Lonergan’s functional specialties. I have referenced Robert Doran’s work on psychic conversion in theological method, noting the need to pay wider attention to symbolic meaning beyond the level of the conceptual. What this could imply at each stage in relation to music includes the following points:

- Be attentive to how music is working and the questions it is raising in any given theological context, theological and/or cultural (communications), as well the data on musical studies available at any given time (research);⁶⁸
- Study how music is understood in any given time or place, and why (interpretation), and where this understanding fits into the wider theological and ecclesial landscape (systematics);⁶⁹

63. Charles Darwin, *The Descent of Man and Selection in Relation to Sex* (Chicago: Encyclopedia Britannica, 1955). See especially chap. 13 at 456–63 in relation to birds, and chap. 19 at 567–71 for other species and humans.

64. See Harry Freud, “My Uncle Sigmund,” in *Freud As We Knew Him*, ed. H. M. Ruitenbeek (Detroit: Wayne State University, 1971) 312–13 at 313.

65. Patel, *Music, Language and the Brain* and *Music and the Brain*, a series of podcasts made by Library of Congress interviewing experts at the intersection of cognitive neuroscience and music, sponsored by the Dana foundation, <http://www.loc.gov/podcasts/musicandthebrain>.

66. Dadosky, *Recovery of Beauty* 128–29.

67. Patel, *Music, Language, and the Brain* 317.

68. Much of the work in the aforementioned interdisciplinary organizations around music and theology is currently at both these levels, gathering contextually situated analysis of music and modes of accessing them into dialogue with one another. Ways of analyzing perceived meaning of music in theological forums need to be found and verified so as to explore music’s potential as a carrier of meaning within and beyond cultural contexts. This is one of the first steps needed.

69. The number of individual studies in theological stances on music that work on this level is growing. See, e.g., Jeremy Begbie whose latest work, *Music, Modernity and God*, is an impressive analysis addressing important questions of the history of interpretation of music in modernity and its underlying philosophy. See n. 4, *supra*.

- Reason and reflect on how this understanding has changed over time (what was/is moving forward and why (history) and what reality or truth of faith a piece or style of music could be related to or expressive of (doctrines));⁷⁰
- Deliberate on what are the conflicts, challenges or insights to be explored in our diverse understandings of a piece or genre of music (dialectics) and their underlying roots—the presence or absence of religious, moral, intellectual, psychic conversion (foundations).⁷¹

This is a very simple presentation of Lonergan's theological method. Attention would need to be given as well to the twofold dynamic of human consciousness, ascending through intentionality analysis from experience through to decision, and/or descending from a personal value-based experience of falling-in-love through to understanding, identifying, and integrating it into new and expanded horizons of experience and meaning. But it could help organize the work being done and identify that which is not, as yet. Much work in these areas is already underway, by individuals and groups, but they have yet to intersect in an adequate way with the mainstream of theological work. Music is too important in human and religious life to remain at the margins of theological method.

Practical Implications

How, then, do these considerations shed light on our reception of music, and on its composition and creation? And how do these relate to theological creativity?

Music's Aesthetic Pattern of Experience and Theology

The presence and importance of music in contemporary society and the Christian faith, in particular in evangelization and young churches, should prompt theologians to question why that is and what it reveals of Christian faith (communications). Given the corporeal and kinesthetic dimensions of musical symbolism, I propose that music has particular relevance to the doctrine of the continued incarnation of Christ (the Mystical

70. This is an immense task in any field, but Pierangelo Sequeri's aforementioned work on the intersection of music and spirituality in the history of Western music is a significant example of the kind of insights it can offer; Sequeri, *Musica e mistica*. Richard Viladesau's ongoing work on the history of theology as seen through the lens of art is an example of the fruitfulness that could be achieved with similar work on music: Viladesau, *The Beauty of the Cross: The Passion of Christ in Theology and the Arts, from the Catacombs to the Eve of the Renaissance* (Oxford: Oxford University, 2006); *The Triumph of the Cross: The Passion of Christ in Theology and the Arts, from the Renaissance to the Counter-Reformation* (Oxford: Oxford University, 2008); *The Pathos of the Cross: The Passion of Christ in Theology and the Arts: The Baroque Era* (Oxford: Oxford University, 2014).

71. This level implies reflection on both patterns of experience—receptive and creative—as Dadosky points out. I will reserve some points for the last section of this article.

Body of Christ) and the ascension (doctrines–systematics). Both of these essentially related doctrines speak of the current presence of the risen and glorious body of Jesus Christ, on earth and in heaven, our experience of which is colored and challenged by changes in humanity’s cosmological awareness that have not as yet been fully articulated and integrated into the doctrinal expressions of our faith.⁷² Where is the second Person of the Trinity, risen and glorified, on earth and in heaven? How do we access that glorified embodied presence, the knowledge of whom constitutes our “eternity life,”⁷³ here and now? Could the symbolic awareness necessary for the reformulation of the credal doctrine of the ascension in a way that corresponds to these shifts in cosmological understanding be aided, for example, by the symbolic form that is music? The importance of music in the conversion and ongoing experience of Christ’s presence for many would seem to point in this direction. If this is the case, a greater understanding of its meaningfulness will have tremendous influence in the fields of spirituality and liturgical theology.

On another note, there is the question of what the integration of the aesthetic pattern of experience into theological reflection would actually imply for those who work in theological disciplines. First and foremost, as a purely common-sense observation, it implies making space and time in theological conferences and publications for the level of awareness that music touches and awakens in us. We are accustomed to the theoretical pattern of reflection on experience in a way that is practically exclusive of other approaches, failing to perceive that theoretical approaches to a culturally and historically conditioned tradition need to be complemented with others. Second, it implies the need for interdisciplinary approaches; the acceptance of philosophy in theology has not yet really reached areas of musicology and neighboring disciplines that should inform its understanding of music. Both of these observations stretch or challenge the format of our normal understanding of academic theology, but would help towards the self-appropriation necessary for a theology understood in terms of

72. A strand of theology called transformation theology spearheaded by Oliver Davies at King’s College, London, has developed this line of research: Oliver Davies, Paul D. Janz, and Clemens Sedmak, *Transformation Theology: Church in the World* (Edinburgh: T&T Clark, 2007) or *Theology of Transformation: Faith, Freedom and the Christian Act* (Oxford: Oxford University, 2013). Space does not permit the full account of why this particular truth of faith was identified as the framework within which music in contemporary society and Christian praxis can be best understood, but it is drawing attention in current theological reflection, and is an area Dadosky names as one with which a theology of beauty intersects: “the beauty of the body, the doctrine of the incarnation, the resurrection, the ascension (and with this the assumption of Mary) and the Pauline teaching of the ‘glorified body’ (Phil 3:19).” Dadosky, *Recovery of Beauty* 212.

73. The expression is drawn from Scripture scholar Mary Coloe as a more accurate translation of a Johannine understanding of life in Christ than eternal life. Mary Coloe, “‘The End Is Where We Start from’: Afterlife in the Fourth Gospel,” in *Lebendige Hoffnung—Ewiger Tod?! Jenseitsvorstellungen im Hellenismus, Judentum und Christentum*,” ed. Manfred Lang and Michael Labhan (Leipzig: Evangelische, 2007) 177–99 at 178n6.

interiority, as well as the hermeneutical task at the heart of theological work.⁷⁴ Music could aid in freeing our own awareness and speaking to that of others whose patterns of experience are not mainly theoretical. It could also aid towards theological creativity itself: what is the place of music in the creative process of those of us who write theologically? When do we listen to it, and when do we switch it off? I suspect that music plays more of a role in theological writing than we might think. Paying attention to musical tastes and listening habits and how they interact with thought processes and insights could reveal that music's symbolic action overflows into and affects the creative writing of those who do theology more than we are currently aware.

Music's Artistic Pattern of Experience and Theological Creativity

Perhaps even more crucial is the integration of the artistic pattern of experience in theology: what is the potential effect of music-making in theological creativity? In the history of Christianity, there are composers whose work, fully informed by Christian faith and at times by theological knowledge, who have had great influence over time. But we also need to ask about the role of composing and making music as a dimension of theology. The artistic pattern of experience is related by Lonergan intrinsically to how we construct our lives (the dramatic pattern of existence). Would its inclusion in academic research, at some level, aid in the self-appropriation necessary for theological thought in our current cultural contexts? Rahner lamented the loss of theologians who are also hymn writers: "What has become of the times when the great theologians also wrote hymns? Has theology become more perfect because theologians have become prosaic?"⁷⁵ This observation could point towards a real loss for theology's creative process, on two levels: the first sense of loss is the absence of music in considering how faith could seek an understanding of itself—through music, rather than alongside words—with all that it could include of embodied and connected knowledge. (A recent study on the Christian songwriter as theologian, situating musical composition within the functional specialty of foundations is exceptional.⁷⁶)

74. The recent article by George Karuvelil, "To Whom Am I Speaking? Communication, Culture, and Fundamental Theology," *Theological Studies* 76 (2015), doi:10.1177/0040563915605253, implicitly addresses the issue of to whom and how theology is communicating, and the need to adapt its methods accordingly.

75. Karl Rahner, "Priest and Poet," in *Theological Investigations*, vol. 3, (London: D.L.T., 1974) 294–316 at 316.

76. This study on the role of a Christian songwriter as a source of theological insight from a Lonerganian perspective was completed at the University of Divinity in 2013 by James Maher MSC, under the direction of Kathleen Williams. Maher situates the composition of Christian music in the functional specialty of foundations. Maher, "The Christian Songwriter as Theologian: Giving Voice to the Converted Heart and Mind" (master's thesis, University of Divinity, 2013), <http://repository.divinity.edu.au/1368>. James Maher became ill and died prematurely in 2015 before he had the chance to publish it. I am

The second loss accrues to music-makers who are also theologians, when they marginalize one side of their understanding of faith by moving music to the edges of the theological endeavor. Is it really beneficial to theology that they keep separate these dimensions of understanding, or at best keep music-making a silent partner in the creative processes of theology? How would theological writing change if these theologians were to approach their work differently?⁷⁷

Conclusion

A final word is due on the importance and even urgency of this task for some of the wider questions that current theology is grappling with. It is over thirty years since David Tracy pointed out that theological discourse included three audiences: “the wider society, the academy, and the church.”⁷⁸ While much ink has been spent in exploring the shifts of culture within which we find ourselves, and in that sense is written with the first audience in mind, the manner in which theology is formulated has changed little. The main audience it reaches is academic: within or beyond church walls. George Steiner noted—also some thirty years ago—that “music has long been, and continues to be, the unwritten theology of those who lack or reject any formal creed.”⁷⁹ This is still the case, the only difference being that now the division between those with and without a formal creed is less clear. If theology is to serve its purpose and speak beyond the academic and conceptual realms, it has to find ways to understand how people make sense of their lives. The insights to be gathered are not only one-directional—what theology has to offer the world—but also how theology’s understanding of faith could be enriched from beyond the circles of explicit Christian belonging and faith practice. Paul Crowley suggested recently that “discipleship” is one of the modes of believing to which theology needs to pay more attention.⁸⁰ I propose the role of music in people’s

grateful to him for his generosity in sharing his work with me while he still could. Not coincidentally, in the lead-up to his death and the necessity of deciding where to invest his efforts, he chose completing and publishing his last CD over publishing the thesis. James Maher MSC, *Hidden within the World: Songs of Hope, Loss and Transformation*, As One Voice WP500, 2015, accessed Jan 3, 2016, <http://www.willowpublishing.com.au/willow-publishing-products/contemporary-collections/hidden-within-the-world-cd>.

77. Balthasar was an accomplished musician who rarely wrote about music. Did it not affect his theology? Was he fearful of drawing the consequences of that experience? Would we not be the richer if we knew what it meant to him? A first step in all of this process could be, I would suggest, that theologians write more about the processes of their writing—where and how it intersects with music at some level, if it does—and if it does not.
78. David Tracy, *The Analogical Imagination: Christian Theology and the Culture of Pluralism* (New York: Crossroad, 1981) 5.
79. George Steiner, *Real Presences* (Chicago: University of Chicago, 1991) 218.
80. He does so within the context of inviting theology to reformulate the link between the content of our faith (*fides quae*) and the process of our coming to believe (*fides qua*). See Paul G. Crowley, “Mystagogy and Mission: The Challenge of Nonbelief and the Task of Theology,” *Theological Studies* 76 (2015), doi:10.1177/0040563914565541.

understanding of life and faith is another. But to do so adequately implies building a framework for the task that does not sit on the margins of theological method but relates to the whole. This article is one such attempt.⁸¹

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81. I am indebted to the feedback and critique of colleagues at the 30th Annual Fallon Memorial Lonergan Symposium in Los Angeles, April 2015, where some of the content was first presented. I would also like to thank the referees, whose thoughtful reading and comments greatly enriched my thinking.