

# Musique – Peinture. For Jean-Jacques Nattiez

Annegret Fauser

One of my fondest memories of you, Jean-Jacques, goes back to a bitterly cold week one February in Montreal when Tim and I stayed in your studio that also served as the guestroom for the Ezrati–Nattiez household: so many books, scores, and recordings and such wonderful artifacts, a place of intellectual and artistic joy! It was a tangible manifestation of the artistic richness that pervades both your life and your writing. Whether it is the music of Pierre Boulez, Claude Debussy, or Richard Wagner, the musical and artistic creativity of the Inuit and Ainu, or the broader challenges of the conception of musical semiology or a unified musicological theory—the grounding of your work in the sonic is extraordinary, indeed. Few texts put this breadth of perspective centred on music in such beautiful relief as your glorious analysis and historiography of the shepherd’s English-horn melody in *Tristan und Isolde*.

My work has been influenced by your thinking ever since I was a doctoral student in Paris in the late 1980s, and I discovered on the shelves of the Ecole Normale Supérieure your *Fondements d’une sémiologie de la musique*. At that point, the question of signification in music had started to disquiet me: the feminist scholar approaching musical works from a gender perspective in terms of their creation through to their reception, and the one exploring French Wagnerism. The famous tripartite concept framing the sonic object within its tension field of poietics and esthetics helped me to formulate a way forward of thinking music culturally, of grounding my own feminist explorations of the poietic and esthetic perhaps even against the grain of your thinking, and of embracing an interdisciplinarity centred on musical practice. Since then, I have had the honour of responding to the first of your lectures on “Unité ou Eclatement de la Musicologie? Propositions pour une musicologie générale” in 2007, engaging with your work on Wagner in particular, and discussing music and art with you, whether in North America or France.

Tim’s and my libraries are filled with your writings, but there is one I treasure above all others: a gorgeous book that you co-authored with Rita Ezrati, *Peindre—Écouter—Écrire* (2017). It is a carefully curated collage that creates a series of contrapuntal juxtapositions of Rita’s art and your writing. I often take the book into my hands and browse through it, enjoying both the writing and the images. The arch of this book is poetic in itself—for example, the opening sequence of texts on chamber music by György Ligeti, Kaija Saariaho, George Benjamin, Ada Gentile, and Lorraine Vaillancourt corresponds to a succession of luminous abstract paintings that create

a visual *Lichtbogen* (as the piece by Saariaho is named). Rita's artwork (*Hurler*, 2015, p. 73) even migrated from this book into my own publications as the title image of *Performing Commemoration* (2020) that I co-edited with Michael A. Figueroa. I evoke *Peindre—Écouter—Écrire* because it merges in a uniquely beautiful, Ezrati–Nattiez way what has become my own interdisciplinary life as both a writer on music and an artist. Listening—the central word in this title—is the foundation on which you, Jean-Jacques have built your work and that I hope to continue strengthening in mine. *Merci de tout mon cœur!*