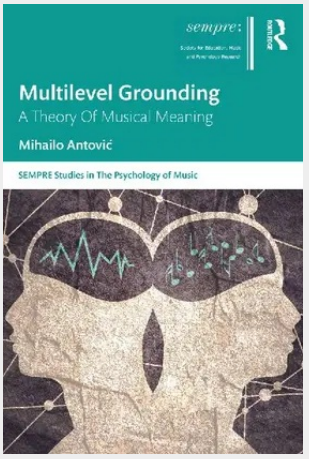
Antovic

Multilevel Grounding

A Theory Of Musical Meaning



Multilevel Grounding develops a new approach to musical meaning—Multilevel-Grounded Semantics, addressing the well- known paradox that music seems full of meaning yet there is little consensus among listeners on what exactly it is that this meaning communicates. Offering a balance between formalist and referentialist approaches, Antovi c 's theory proposes that musical signifi cation emerges from constant cross-space mappings between the musical structure and the listener's experience. The process is crucially constrained by several hierarchical and partly recursive levels of grounding: perceptual, schematically embodied, affective, conceptual, culturally elaborated, and individual. These levels are responsible for a range of phenomena that increase in complexity, from involuntary bodily responses to the manipulation of musical expectancies over cross- modal inferences relating the musical parameters to spatial domains to full- fl edged experiential narratives accompanying the music, as in opera or fi lm scoring. The book combines cutting edge insights from the fi elds of philosophy of mind, cognitive science, semiotics, linguistics, and music cognition, using a broad range of examples from traditional, classical, and popular world musics, into a theoretical system that shows how the focus on the grounding problem may help researchers convincingly resolve the apparent ungraspability of musical semantics.

MULTILEVEL GROUNDING develops a new approach to musical meaning - Multilevel-Grounded Semantics, addressing the well-known paradox that music seems full of meaning yet there is little consensus among listeners on what exactly it is that this meaning communicates.

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