

Thieves of Music. Philosophy, Music and Plagiarism - eds Alessandro Bertinetto, Ezio Gamba, Davide Sisto

When a piece of music reminds us of another, we may feel annoyed. This experience seems indeed to belittle both the potential of artistic creation and the composer's duties. However, the inherited view of musical originality, that underlies this feeling of uneasiness, is apparently at odds with the actual praxis of composition and musical creation. This is one of the reasons why the aesthetic and philosophical significance of musical plagiarism deserves to be discussed.

From a historical point of view, the glorification of originality in artistic creation dates back to Romanticism. Ancient music felt a lesser need for originality. In Bach's time contrapuntal melodies and dance music relied a lot on stereotypes. And of course the practice of re-using themes, melodies or whole pieces from other musical works in different contexts survived well beyond the age of Baroque music. Melodic materials belonged to a shared cultural heritage and nobody would have blamed a composer for using a theme by another composer as theme for one of his own fugues.

Nowadays the situation is not very different, especially in music genres other than the so-called classical or cultured music, typical examples being *blues* and early *rock*. However, the contrary seems to hold in the world of

pop

music. Here we witness daily accusations of plagiarism, which, at a closer glance, do not seem to originate in a widespread practice of actual plagiarism, but rather in the impossibility to serenely accept what is obvious to the bluesman, namely that every single piece of music sounds like so many that have been written and/or recorded in the past.

"Estetica. Studi e ricerche" aims at discussing this complex connection with a monographic issue that will be published in the first half of 2014.

The topic of musical plagiarism can be considered from different philosophical, aesthetic, musicological, juridical and historical perspectives, which may lead to a redefinition of our idea of musical creativity. It could be investigated how the concepts of musical creativity and originality have changed through history and how such changes are related to the idea of intellectual property regarding the products of musical creativity. Another issue to be discussed

is musical quotation and the different forms it took through the history of music. Moreover, papers can deal with the decline of the concept (or rather the myth?) of musical genius after Romanticism; but they can also argue, both in historical and philosophical terms, against the idea of a decline of musical genius. Finally, papers can focus on specific ontological problems of plagiarism in music as a performative art.

The deadline for submission is *April 30, 2013*. Papers must satisfy the requirements of blind submission and double-blind review. The texts must be either in Italian or in English, must be written according to the specifications of *The Chicago Manual of Style*, 15th ed. (University of Chicago Press, 2003), and must be no longer than 5.000 words (including footnotes and a 150 words abstract to be written in English). The Works Cited page should appear at the end of your paper and start on a separate sheet. Twelve papers will be selected.

Both the essay and the abstract must be sent in a single file (in .doc format) to the following email address: ladridimusica@gmail.com