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**Knowledge in musical performance
-enlightened by sources who discuss the articulation of knowledge.
About the project and excerpts.**

This paper is based on my Master dissertation in music education: *Kunnskap i musikkutøving -lystet av kjelder som problematiserer artikulering av kunnskap* (Osa 2000b), and the article "Å sjå noko som noko" (Osa 2000a). The dissertation is about to be published as a Grieg Academy Publication at the University of Bergen.

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1. INTRODUCTION AND APPROACHING THE PROBLEM

Theme

We who sing and play musical instruments, the great ones and the little ones, the experts and the novices, the loving amateur and the professional artist, we all play and sing in our own way. We are able, we know and we do something when we play and sing, we have knowledge in our musical performance. It is this phenomena I want to enlighten. What are we doing? What is it those experienced ones who are good at it can do that the inexperienced cannot? How can we understand this knowledge? How do we acquire this knowledge? I want to examine the knowledge that is at work in singing and playing a musical instrument. This knowledge I call *knowledge in musical performance*.

My interest concerns opening up, making visible and understanding the knowledge that musical performance is. Is my perspective the perspective of the performer? Yes and no. My perspective is the performer's in the sense that it is the performer who carries the knowledge and who through playing and singing can show the knowledge to those who understand. But the performer knows and does more than he can understand and explain. We cannot explain knowledge exhaustively and we can never understand knowledge completely. Our knowledge is baked into and constituted by the world, and should we understand knowledge completely, then we have to understand the world completely, which we do not. My perspective is not the performer's, but the knowledge which consciously and unconsciously is our musical performance.

Starting point

As an instrumental teacher and a musician, as a carrier of more or less conscious knowledge in instrumental education and musical performance, I saw my world of

experience, my life world, verbally articulated in the epistemological paradigm presented in «Kap. 1. Hva er humaniora?» [«Chap. 1. What are the humanities?»], in the book *Fra kunst til vitenskap* [From art to science] (1996) by Tore Nordenstam. The chapter is based on the practical philosophy Kjell S. Johannessen has derived based on the later philosophy of Ludwig Wittgenstein (1889-1951). Reading this chapter was for me a revelation where I experienced that what I knew, but had not been able to express verbally, was articulated. The statements appeared to me as obvious, logic and concurrent with my experienced reality. I was at home. Was it my previous suppositions which had kept me from understanding the text in this sense?

Objective

With an immediate assurance of the philosophy of Wittgenstein as a fertile provider of categories of understanding and ways of depicting knowledge in musical performance, I found a way to make a verbal articulation of my interest. I want to contribute to an articulated foundation for an instrumental didactic by applying the practical philosophy where Johannessen is interpreting Wittgenstein, and other sources I find usable, on the domain of musical performance. I want to give a verbal articulation of what knowledge in musical performance is, map the individuality, the distinctive stamp or the nature of musical performance by clarifying what characterises distributing, exercising and communicating the knowledge musical performance is.

Such insights give didactic implications. Depictions in the sources of what knowledge is and how knowledge comes to work gives implicit and explicit normative guidance to pedagogical activities.

Approaching the problem

My main approach to the problem is: What is knowledge in musical performance? A closer specification, which lies implicit in the form verbal statements, delimits the approach to the problem to: How to use verbal language in the articulation of knowledge in musical performance? If we at the same time understood this work as scientific or logic positivistic, in the sense that the verbal statements should be formal logical statements, I would risk missing the objective. I would be able to say something logical, precise and probable about musical performance by using quantitative methods from social sciences or experimental psychology on what Nielsen (1993, 1994, 1998) calls the outer layers of music, but it is not this kind of knowledge «musicians and music lovers see as being crucially important» (Swanwick 1994, p. 16), it is in the deeper layers «many people are immediately engaged» (Nielsen 1983, s. 311. My translation from danish). As a musician and music lover in music educational activities, it is the crucially important knowledge I want to enlighten. But if I think that a logical language is not able to articulate the domain of my interest of cognition, should I then rather let it be, should we not rather be quiet about what we cannot say precisely and distinctly, and let practise speak for itself? Such a statement ends the logic-philosophical dissertation *Tractatus Logico Philosophicus*, the first main work by Ludwig Wittgenstein:

Whereof one cannot speak, thereof one must be silent.
(Wittgenstein 1922/1988, s. 189)

A verbal approach to the problem

As an instrumental teacher, my experience has been that I without problems teach pupils to play, many of them become very good players, prosper with the playing, and keep on playing as professional musicians, music teachers and amateur musicians as adults. For me, instrumental teaching is a meaningful and integral practise I like and where I think I am useful. Thus, this work is not motivated by a problem related to practical music teaching, but motivated by the problem of verbal or linguistic articulation of the knowledge that is at work in musical performance and thereby in instrumental teaching. The problem is related to music pedagogy as a science about music education, and in which sense this science can succeed in describing and understanding what takes place in music teaching as cultural practise. It is in this field I want to participate by seeing knowledge in musical performance from the perspectives of sources that discuss the articulation of knowledge. To what degree can we say something about what is important? And if we can say something about it, how can we say it?

Running up against limits

Wittgenstein changed his point of view. Gradually he did no longer think that one should be silent about what one could not express in a precise and logical language. In a discussion Wittgenstein had with Friedrich Waisman in 1929 Wittgenstein says:

Man has the impulse to run up against the limits of language. Think for example of the astonishment that anything exists. This astonishment cannot be expressed in the form of a question, and there is also no answer to it. Everything which we feel like saying can, a priori, only be nonsense. Yet the tendency represented by the running-up against *points to something*. (Waisman 1967, s. 68-69, Wittgenstein's emphasis).¹

After quoting this statement by Wittgenstein, the Wittgenstein interpreter Kjell S. Johannessen writes:

Everything that is important for us, everything valuable in the lives of human beings, we cannot express. ... Still we cannot stop continuing our headless act. And not only that, we have even a duty to again and again run up against the limits of language. For the enterprise as such is showing the way to something that cannot be said in any other way. ... What cannot be said is a reality in our lives. We cannot stop gesticulating in its direction, although we know that it is in vain (Johannessen 1994, s. 13. My translation).

I see my work as running up against the limits of language, I want to show the way to something that is outside language by using language. If this is realised, that I succeed to show the way to something we cannot say by using language, the words will be transparent, as in a poem. Language shows, gesticulates towards, that which is outside language, that which is valuable in our lives, that knowledge I as a musician and music lover find crucially important in my music educational activities, and which I call knowledge in musical performance.

¹ Said in a comment to Heidegger's concepts being and anxiety, but the point here is not these concepts as such, but how they are used as an example to show a common insight. This quotation is translated to Norwegian in Johannessen 1994, s. 12-13.

Choice of method

My objective is to articulate and put into words knowledge in musical performance. I choose to believe that I myself have this knowledge to such a degree that it can function as sufficient material and foundation for reflection in the work, I am a participant and not a spectator to the cultural practice that music performance is. What I need, is help to put into words and analyse this knowledge. To obtain a language which is able to say something about knowledge in musical performance, I have chosen to use sources which I think in good ways articulate the meaningful life world I know as a musician and instrumental pedagogue.

Choosing sources

The starting point I found in Wittgenstein and Johannessen. Wittgenstein has been seen as the origin to both the traditions of logical empiricism, something he himself took distance from, and the origin to what Johannessen (1996, p. 117) calls «The tradition in philosophy of science from Wittgenstein». In this tradition we find the science historian Thomas S. Kuhn (1922-1996) who by using the concept paradigm relativises scientific activities, culturally and especially historically.

In Scandinavian pedagogical and general and subject didactical literature we find Wittgenstein mentioned together with Michael Polanyi, in connection with *tacit knowledge*, a concept Polanyi uses explicitly. Preliminary investigations in the writings of Polanyi convinced me that he too could help me to articulate knowledge in musical performance. Kuhn had read Polanyi and mentions Polanyi in *The Structure of Scientific Revolutions* (1962) in connection with that a scientific paradigm exists without a complete set of explicit rules:

Michael Polanyi has brilliantly developed a very similar theme, arguing that much of the scientist's success depends upon 'tacit knowledge', i. e., upon knowledge that is acquired through practise and that cannot be articulated explicitly (Kuhn 1962, p. 44).

The writings of Wittgenstein, and the writings of Polanyi from the 1930's and ahead (Polanyi 1946/1964, 1958/1962, 1967/2000, 1967, 1969, Polanyi and Prosch 1974), are philosophic epistemological. They depict generally what knowledge is and how knowledge comes to work. Wittgenstein and Polanyi are explicitly discussing the part of language in knowledge, and are therefore helpful to me when I want to say something about knowledge in musical performance by using verbal language. Wittgenstein points beyond language by using the concept 'the inexpressible' and by emphasizing that linguistic meaning is constituted by use. Polanyi points beyond language by using among other things the concept the tacit dimension.

In music didactics, knowledge is discussed in relation to music education. Andreasen (1979) sees music as a school subject, among other things, as an art subject and a handwork subject. Much of the layout and most of the topics from Andreasen (1979) is deepend and further developed by Nielsen (1994, 1998). Nielsen (ibid.) portrays the base of music education by using an axis from art, via handwork and everyday culture, to science. The art dimension he calls the *ars dimension* and the science dimension the *scientia dimension*. In latin *ars* means *art* and *to be able to* and *scientia* *to know* (Nielsen 1994, p 106-107). «The *ars dimension* encompass our sensual pursuits and experiences with music as a sounding phenomenon, while the *scientia dimension* represents the intellectual and verbal language sides of music as a domain of knowledge» (Hanken and Johansen 1998, p. 181-182). The quoted Geir

Johansen made me attentive to that my application of the Wittgenstein based practise philosophy by Kjell S. Johannessen to musical performance showed similarities to the Brit Keith Swanwick's articulation of knowledge in music as 'intuition' and 'analysis' (Swanwick 1994).

I now have four sources I will use as tools in the articulation of knowledge in musical performance, the philosophers Ludwig Wittgenstein and Michael Polanyi, and the music pedagogues Frede V. Nielsen and Keith Swanwick. The philosophers distinguishes themselves by originality and seemingly independently developed lines of thought. The music pedagogues are both based on philosophy, Nielsen on continental hermeneutics and phenomenology (Nielsen 1998, s. 129). Swanwick uses the Italian historian, humanist and (art)philosopher Benedetto Croce as help in articulating knowledge in music, «musical knowledge».

My motivation for using the sources is unequal. Wittgenstein, and gradually Polanyi, I see as the most central, fruitful and in music pedagogy innovative sources, Wittgenstein especially regarding aesthetic cognition, and Polanyi regarding analysing practical and theoretical knowledge as skills. Nielsen is central in Norwegian music pedagogy today, and has delivered a thorough music didactical work in the book *Almen Musikdidaktik* (1994/1998) [*General Music Didactic*]. The source I use by Swanwick, *Musical knowledge Intuition, analysis and music education* (1994), discloses between the lines that the author is intimate with what Nielsen would mention as the ars dimension, Wittgenstein as the inexpressible and Polanyi as «the tacit dimension». This made my interest for Swanwick rise gradually, although the book is an unusual compilation of empirical quantitative enquiries and philosophy of art from earliest 1900'.

Sourcework and categories of analysis

When we look closer on the expression *knowledge in musical performance*, we find that it contains three words that carry meaning on their own, *knowledge*, *music* and *performance*, in addition *in* that together with *performance* gives a dynamic perspective. This gives me three categories: Knowledge, music and performance/act. I am looking for the sources' statements about knowledge, and about the relationship between knowledge and language. This will result in statements about the sources' view on knowledge or their epistemology. Secondly, I am looking for what the sources have to say about music, what view on music they have, and if this can be placed within an established view of art/an established aesthetic. Thirdly I will search for statements about performance or performing, comprehended as an act and as a practise, the sources' pragmatic view. Furthermore, as a fourth category, I want to portray the sources' views on learning and teaching, on conveying and communicating knowledge. Such a system fits in with a preunderstanding about natural coherences between these domains, where a superior general view of knowledge has explicit or implicit views of music and of performance/act. It would then be possible to derive didactic implications from the sources' view on knowledge, music and performance, which seen as one would be the sources' view on knowledge in musical performance.

In proportion to the distinctive stamp of the four main sources, I had to modify this schema. The four categories of analysis fit best with the way Nielsen systematises a music didactic landscape, neither is it difficult to adapt Swanwick to the analytic categories. With four categories of analysis I separated between knowledge and performance or practise, something it soon became clear that Wittgenstein and Polanyi did not. My own thinking had been captured in a picture that blinded me. For

Polanyi knowledge is an act, for Wittgenstein the central insight is that knowledge is constituted by practise, and he uses music and art as examples in showing this. Polanyi discusses explicitly the role of verbal language and other 'languages' in knowledge, and has a separate subchapter about that.

Didactic implications are built-in in the writings of Johannessen. When he, as Wittgenstein, asks how something is, he answers by telling how it is learned. The chapter about Wittgenstein interpreted by Johannessen has therefore two main parts, «Knowledge» and «Music», because the statements of theory of knowledge and aesthetic/view of art integrates practise/act and didactic implications. These two main parts are at the same time partly statements of the same general insight showed in different ways.

2. EXCERPTS FROM THE PROJECT

View of concepts, knowledge and musical performance

In the work I take a *pragmatic-constitutive* perspective on what a concept is. The core in this view is that a concept is primary and most adequately expressed by being practised (Johannessen 1997, p. 6). To establish insight into what knowledge and meaning concepts contain, we must have insight into how concepts are used. Knowledge is mastering concepts in practical action. Usually a concept is understood as the language symbol plus the concept's content, the meaning of the concept. But it is also possible to see a concept as something general without a language symbol. Intersubjective entities of musical meaning without verbal labels can also be comprehended as concepts (Hanken and Johansen 1998, p.182. Kant 1790/1995, p. 31).

There are many aspects and appearances of knowledge, also of knowledge in music, and to acknowledge and recognise all forms of knowledge, it is necessary to use a wide concept of knowledge (Hanken and Johansen 1998, s. 185). Knowledge can be perspectivated as academic tradition, as experience, as cultural indwelling, knowledge has aesthetic and ethic/normative dimensions, and knowledge can be approached with perspectives from sociology of knowledge and from feminism (Imsen 1998, p. 214-215). My approach is the (humanistic) academic tradition, since it is interpreting texts, it is also about cultural indwelling, something both Wittgenstein and Polanyi emphasise, and it is of course about the aesthetic dimension.

As a preliminary statement, I will present some statements about knowledge in musical performance. Knowledge in musical performance is unequal qualities of knowledge within a person, related to the following and other domains of knowledge, the statements are constituted by culture, incomplete and overlapping. I see knowledge in musical performance as:

- using a musical instrument or the voice in a particularly trained way
- reading music or other symbolic systems in music
- phrasing and interpreting pieces of music in a particular style
- playing together with others
- subordinating these activities in an integral musical meaning

The knowledge I want to enlighten is not verbal, but the verbal language plays an important part in how this knowledge is acquired, and in how it is practised and

communicated in teaching and playing. I don't separate between amateurs and professionals, between experts and novices, they all have some knowledge in musical performance, at different levels, in different degrees and of different qualities.

Research method: Hermeneutics as revelation

I use written sources as tools in the attempt to enlighten the knowledge that is unfolding in musical performance. The enterprise of the humanistic subjects is to interpret and understand that which is manmade; history, art, language and ideas. This activity is called hermeneutics. Alvesson and Sköldberg (1994) separates between *objectifying hermeneutic* and what they call *aletic* hermeneutics. In objectifying hermeneutics, one is trying to achieve correspondence between the researcher as a subject and something objective, something outside the researcher. The researcher's understanding involves achieving insight into the objective world or reality outside the researcher. Objectifying hermeneutics is built on separation between object and subject.

It is not this way in my work, and not in *aletic* hermeneutics. Aletic hermeneutics expresses hermeneutics as the revelation or emergence of something that until now has been hidden (*ibid.*, p. 131). Alvesson and Sköldberg gives aletic hermeneutics three subcategories, *existential hermeneutis* (Heidegger and early Gadamer), *poetic hermeneutics* (later Gadamer and Ricoeur) and *the hermeneutics of suspicion* (Ricoeur). I see the method in my work as aletic hermeneutic, with the subcategories existential and poetic hermeneutics, when I am trying to show insights, and hope that insights will disclose as revelations.

Existential hermeneutics became a guidepost to Polanyi. Existential hermeneutics is not about a subject who passively, rationally and theoretically observes an object, but about an act of knowledge where both object and subject are created. The understanding act of knowledge comes first, subject and object are derived and misleading categories (*ibid.* p. 135). When I disclose and see the meaning in something, I create both myself and what I see, and I am what I see, and what I see is me.

Poetical hermeneutic became a guidepost to Wittgenstein. Gadamer thought that thinking and understanding most deeply is metaphoric-poetic and not logical-formal. For Gadamer rhetorical means as metaphors are not decorations, they are formative suppositions in thinking and understanding. Hester (1967) says, in the light of Wittgenstein, that language primarily is pictorial and not verbal. «There is always an poetic 'aura' of pictures around words, and to our metaphor we choose some of these» (Alvesson and Sköldberg 1994, p. 141. My translation from Swedish). A metaphor and our imagination make us *see something as something*, it makes something appear in a certain way.

Wittgenstein excerpt 1: Musical performance as aesthetic practise

The diversity that makes up the domain of aesthetic experience, is by Johannessen called aesthetic practice, this concept falls inn under the concept *language game*. Wittgenstein used the concept 'game' as an analogy for the way language works, thereof the concept language game. A game, for instance chess, is constituted by the rules and the playing/practising of the game. The meaning/content of a concept comes forward by portraying the practises the use of the concept enter into. Such a portrayal is the *logical grammar* of the concept. Cunning use av concepts involves mastering relations in contexts the concept enters into. These relations are norms within place and time. Cunning use of concepts is therefore using concepts correctly within the

geographically and historically established context. Cunning use of concepts are learned by contextual practise. This statement applies all use and forming of concepts, it is a common insight (Johannessen 1984, s. 32). I see this as applying to concepts that constitute knowledge in musical performance, and these concepts can and cannot be tied to verbal or other symbols.

This common insight is used by Johannessen to portray «those establishing of concepts, forms of judgement and forms of communication that characterise the aesthetic domain of life. The primary goal is to establish greater lucidity by making visible fundamental traits of the logical grammar of aesthetic concepts» (ibid., p. 32). By rewriting quotations from Johannessen about aesthetic practice, I get depictions of knowledge in musical performance:

Knowledge in singing and playing rests on extensive experiences with musical performance. The knowledge makes us able to master the fine nuances and coherences between using a musical instrument or the voice in a particularly trained way, phrasing and interpreting pieces of music in a particular style, reading music or other symbolic systems in music, playing together with others, and subordinating these activities in an integral musical meaning, customised to the present situation. It is not possible to put into words this whole of experience, skill, insight and meaning in such a way that it can come into the form of rules free from exceptions. Therefore I say, inspired by Wittgenstein and Johannessen that, we learn knowledge in musical performance the way we learn to make correct judgements. That means that we must understand the knowledge in our musical performance from an extensive repertoire of paradigmatic couplings between situation and way of singing and playing. Particularly clear ways of playing and singing are, until better examples exists, make norms in our understanding in musical performance.

To sing and play is to install the musical performance within a family of ways of singing and playing, where particular qualities are made visible through the establishing of contrasts. How qualified the single comparison is, can in each case be decided by minutely examining the likenesses and differences the musical performance accentuates. To play and sing within a culturally established practise of performance, to play and sing correctly, is to obtain a significant repertoire of ways of playing and singing, that we later can use as cases of comparison in relation to performing music we yet do not know.

In the second part of *Philosophical Investigations* (Wittgenstein 1953) Wittgenstein creates a dialogue about what it means to see something as something, his text has treated examples from gestalt psychology that show that we can see the same as different things. A pencil line drawing, the *duckrabbit*, can alternating be seen as either a duck or a rabbit, depending on if we perceive two narrow curves as a duck's beak or a rabbit's ears. Then Wittgenstein writes:

Here it occurs to me that in conversations on aesthetic matters we use the words: «You have to see it like *this*, this is how it is meant»; «When you see it like *this*, you see where it goes wrong»; «You have to hear this bar as an introduction»; «You must hear it in this key»; «You must phrase it like *this*» (which can refer to hearing as well as to playing) (Wittgenstein 1953, p. 202e. Original cursive and parenthesis).

From these examples Johannessen (1990/1998) derives four identification marks of use of (verbal) language in aesthetics. These identification marks are the

logical grammar of aesthetic practise. I apply this grammar to musical performance and music education:

1. *The work of art is present.* It is not obvious that the music is present in music education, and if it is not, the schooling is without meaning. The music will gradually be realised when I help the student to make the music appear in his or her playing, but I should always demonstrate and play together with the student, so that the potential for aesthetic cognition is present.
2. *The use of language takes place within an intimate context.* The participants must be familiar with the work of art. To be familiar involves a personal and detailed knowledge of the present work of art. Schooling is about being familiar. The teacher's didactic competence is in finding overlaps and meeting places between teacher and student.
3. *A particular perspective is taken in relation to an individual work of art.* A special trait of the performance of the music is pointed to. This special perspective assists the understanding of the music. Music education can point the attention to non-verbal musical concepts, for instance concepts of sound.
4. *The statements are on their own without meaning,* Johannessen writes vague. The words only give meaning when they interact with an example or a gesture. It is this Wittgenstein is showing in the above quotation ("Here it occurs to me..."), by using the words *like this*. Transcripts of the words in a music educational practise would be without meaning, because we don't have access to the context that give them meaning, the pragmatic context that constitutes the meaning of the words.

I see this as a good depiction of actual music pedagogical practise, as master classes, rehearsals with orchestras, choirs and bands, instrumental teaching individually and in groups, and different kinds of rehearsals within rhythmic music. This is what goes on when conveying succeeds and learning takes place. But can statements which isolated are without meaning, give meaning? If I was asked how I teach, and I answered: -I usually say that the student should play *like this*, and then I show them by playing for them, how can the student understand what I mean? Can we be sure that the students notice precisely the nuance or the aspect I want them to?

Wittgenstein excerpt 2: Intransitive understanding (revelation)

It is noticeable ... that one with the greatest matter of course expects ones conversation partner to be able to react immediate on the phrasing qua [as] example. He must be able to incorporate it in his repertoire of ways of expression through playing, or to recognise it as a sounding signature in a particularly style of playing. Here is more words in vain. Here must ways of reaction and ways of acting replace the words. This is the place for the intransitive understanding. It is thus no coincident that the ostensive content in the pointing gesture remains verbally unarticulated. It is a logical grammatical trait of the existing situation of communication (Johannessen 1998, p. 109).

Ostensive means showing and exhibiting, pointing to. The ostensive content in the gesture is the verbally unarticulated insight, the knowledge and the understanding, the gesture is referring to. Intransitive understanding is by Johannessen presented as a possible common denominator for Wittgenstein's views on philosophy, language and art (Johannessen 1989, p. 35). This way of understanding is the likeness between understanding art and understanding a statement. Intransitive verbs cannot take a direct object. To shine can be an intransitive verb. When something shines, it doesn't shine something. The verb is telling something about the activity of the subject. The subject is shining. The music is shining. Not something, but itself. When the student understands what I mean, when he sees and performs the wished aspect, and with that achieves intimate knowledge in musical performance as an aesthetic practise, he or she has understood in an intransitive way.

Wittgenstein is engaged in the idea that seeing something *as* a work of art, *as* a piece of music, is dependent on how I see it. That something appears to me as a piece of music in a certain way, is dependent on the fact that I see it in the correct perspective. The art of work is not causing an effect on me, but is showing or revealing itself, if I see it correctly. That way, the aesthetic experience is not an effect by the work of art, but an attitude or a setting in me. The work of art acquires its existence by me seeing it like this. The realisation of the work of art is in the person who sees, in the way of seeing. The work of art is offers itself as a noncausal explanation who we intransitively, immediately, can see or cannot see, accept or reject. To see something as a work of art, is to understand it correctly in a historically and culturally context.

The meaning in a statement is, in the same way as the meaning in a work of art something that must *hit*. The meaning content is what cannot be said directly, incorporated into what is being said. To see something as something, means that we are taking a special perspective. And what we see is itself and nothing else.

When we see a work of art correctly, we are on its wavelength, we are tuned to reception, and we sway in its rhythm. Through examples, gestures, analogies and aphorisms the attention can be pointed so that the inexpressible shows itself as an insight.

I see this as valid depictions of musical performance. The realisation of the music lies within the performer, within the way of playing. The music is offering itself as a non-causal explanation that, I intransitively, immediately, can or cannot realise. Musical performance is to play correctly in a historically and culturally context. When I play correct I am on wavelength with the music and sway in its rhythm, and the inexpressible is revealing itself to me.

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