

Pettersson SMT panel

Theorizing Disability in the Music of Allan Pettersson

[or] Allan Pettersson as a Topic for Disability Studies in Music [I prefer this]

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I.

Allan Pettersson (1911-1980) was a Swedish composer of formidable distinction active primarily in the third quarter of the 20th century. A beaten child brought up in the slums of Stockholm, he started playing the viola at an early age and eventually turned to composition as well. He made his living as a violist in the Stockholm Philharmonic until severe rheumatoid arthritis forced early retirement from the orchestra. A severe bout with nephritis (a kidney ailment) resulted in extensive hospitalization later on (Kube 1996, 11). He remained active as a composer throughout these ordeals, his music explicitly reflecting psychological, physical, spiritual, and, inevitably, sociopolitical issues that may make him an ideal subject for Disability Studies in music. He left 16 massive symphonies, two violin concertos, a viola concerto, three large concertos for string orchestra, an important song cycle, and several other works of consequence. Pettersson is considered a national hero in Sweden, and has generated substantial scholarly and performance activity both there and in Germany. He is known in the US primarily to record collectors, though he made a brief public splash in this country with the release of his Seventh Symphony conducted by Antal Dorati on a well distributed London LP in the 70s; his Eighth Symphony was recorded by Sergiu Comissiona with the Baltimore Symphony on Deutsche Grammophon and released shortly after his death. His complete works are available on German and Swedish labels and are easily obtainable here.

Pettersson's compositions are striking, and bring up numerous provocative issues for music theorists interested in the topic of disability in music. My paper will begin with an introductory overview of Pettersson's symphonic output in relation to the various musical manifestations of disability that may or may not be present in these works. There does exist considerable skepticism in the literature regarding analytical activity that seeks to consider the extramusical connections potentially latent in this composer's work. As I view these connections to be essential to the works' thorough consideration, these notions will be scrutinized, as will the pieces' reception histories in relation to these issues. Part Two will examine some of the burgeoning recent (mostly German) scholarship on Pettersson and its stances on the potential relation between events in the music itself and the biographical facts. Part Three will examine selected passages, mainly from the Sixth Symphony and Second Violin Concerto, and a conclusion will suggest avenues for future research.

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It is evident from Pettersson's earliest compositions that psychological trauma has always played a definitive role in his musical/stylistic world. Thus a decision must be made

immediately regarding which portion of the composer's output and which specific disability may be relevant to consider in this context.

It is possible to divide Pettersson's output into segments along these lines:

-Early works: Symphony 2 (1952-53) [Symphony 1 has been withdrawn], Concerto 1 for String Orchestra (1949-50), Barefoot Songs (1943-45), Violin Concerto 1 (1949), Sonatas for Two Violins:

These works reflect psychological stresses related to biographical issues, not specifically physical disabilities, which had not made their appearance yet. It is important to consider whether or not there are clinical psychological issues reflected in the music of this period to go with the physiological issues of the periods that follow.

-1954 = Diagnosis 1 ("Onset") of rheumatoid arthritis

Symphony 3 (1954-55), Concertos 2-3 for String Orchestra (1956-57) (the often separately performed Mesto movement of Concerto 3 seems particularly relevant here), Symphony 4 (1958-59)

-Mature symphonic cycle begins: Symphony 5 (1960-62, last piece notated without assistance, Rapoport 114 fn. 14), Symphony 6 (1963-66, work disrupted due to hospitalization for arthritis, Rapoport 114), Symphony 7 (1966-67), Symphony 8 (1968-69), Symphony 9 (1970)

-1972 = Diagnosis 2: kidney ailment, nine-month hospitalization [fuzzy reason in Rapoport, 114]

Symphony 10 (1972), Symphony 11 (1973), Symphonic Movement (1973)

-Intermezzo: politically inspired works: Symphony 12 (1974), Vox Humana (1974)

-late works I: Symphony 13 (1976)

-late works II: Synthesis: return to previous stylistic/expressive issues: Violin Concerto 2 (1977-78), Symphony 14 (1978),

-late works III: last works: Symphony 15 (1978), Symphony 16 (1979), Viola Concerto (1979)

Any exploration of Pettersson's music must begin with the Barefoot Songs, a tonal cycle on Pettersson's own elliptical but obviously autobiographical texts. This cycle has a comparable function to Mahler's 'Lieder eines fahrenden Gesellen' in that several of these songs provide material for later, non-texted works (beginning with Sonata 1 [check] for Two Violins and continuing with Symphonies 6, 14, and the Second Violin Concerto. The abstract (non-texted) works of the early period set up a pained, dark atmosphere which will never be absent from the later compositions. This may create problems in coordinating expressive issues with the physiological medical conditions potentially connected to musical traits in the later works.

Soon after the onset of severe (crippling) rheumatoid arthritis, Pettersson wrote his first and to that point most sustained lamentation, the Mesto movement of the Third Concerto for String Orchestra. Since he was slowly losing his abilities as a performer, appears to have been in pain, and most certainly must have had doubts about his future, it seems to be problematic to ignore these biographical issues while considering this particular work, or, to be sure, the Fifth Symphony, which became the last score in Pettersson's own manuscript [Rapoport 114]. It is worth noting that Pettersson was no stranger to his medical condition: indeed, his sister was severely afflicted with it before him. The composer spoke of this awful reality in a 1958 interview:

"I've wanted to cry out [in my music] what [my (also abused) mother] could never say, she and my sister, my sister who never got to be a woman, who was stunted by rheumatoid arthritis, who nearly threw herself out of the window because of the pain and who died one Christmas Eve in the Söder Hospital." [Rapoport 113, fn. 13]

In spite of all this, Pettersson made a point of stating in 1974 that his condition "didn't change [his] situation at all. I was already enclosed in my own world and had adjusted to the loner's struggle." [Rapoport 115,fn. 16]. On the other hand, Pettersson asks: "How can one make music when one is not turned inwardly? When composing, one must look inwardly at oneself." [Revers,fn.1] (And related to this is one of Pettersson's most famous quotes: "My material is my life, the blessed, the cursed" [Revers fn. 35 and elsewhere].) How much of Pettersson's "self" was conditioned by his disability?

## II.

What might have been behind the musical choices made by Pettersson? Were those choices profoundly influenced by issues physiological or psychological (or both)? Or were they merely matters of musical taste and style? What were these specifically musical choices, and what issues do they repeat in the disability studies literature (in all fields)? It may be useful to begin with a work written before the onset of Pettersson's initial, crippling disability, in order to suggest how much stylistic baggage was carried over from those earlier times. In his study of the Second Symphony, Rapoport 1979 points out the works' unprecedented and extreme lengths and extremes of internal proportions, obsessive repetition, (at both literal and on less obvious -- i.e. "deeper" -- levels) (see Rapoport 118 and examples 2-3), "confrontation of apparently calm and stable elements with unstable, at times grotesque and barbaric forces" (the latter expressed in a "strongly expressionistic style"), islands of transcendent "resignation" in some works [Thomas Mann's "merciful narcosis"?] and gestures of "defiance" "against [a] constant threat of death" in others, and finally a "very high density of activity" in the later works. (Rapoport 116-117) The interval of a second is a major motivic figure on various levels in this symphony. "Sudden changes in tempo" (also an issue in Mann) and unpredictability in continuity" are also evident (119), as are timbral extremes ("abnormal" [NB] spacing or scoring", 120, and example 9). Rapoport, however, remains cautious: "[The Second Symphony] is a work of extreme tension and extreme contrasts, a work of unrest, grotesquerie, despair, turbulence, terror. To explain why these impressions are created is an elaborate and perhaps impossible task, yet a few features of the music

[described above] can be pointed out which contribute to them." (118). These, of course, are precisely the analytical tasks posed by a Disability Studies in music.

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In his provocative 2001 article on Pettersson reception, Andreas K.W. Meyer ['Ein Werdegang.Zur Entwicklung der Pettersson-Rezeption in der Bundesrepublik Deutschland von den Jahren bis 1994' ('A Background to the Development of Pettersson Reception in Germany through 1994'), *Allan Pettersson Jahrbuch* 2001, Saarbrück 2002, 35-41] evaluates the state of Pettersson research as well as potential and already employed topics for investigation. (All translations are mine unless otherwise indicated.) Two entries on his list of seven Petterssonian topics are clearly disability-related: physical [and spiritual] pain ['körperliches und seelisches Leiden'] and musical gestures related to it ['Schmerzgebärde'] (36). As a warning to future writers in this area, Meyer quotes Helmut Lohmüller, speaking in 1982 in the context of the Munich premiere of Pettersson's 10th Symphony (see below): "One must abandon reports [reviews, articles, etc.] stressing the composer's physical [NB] and spiritual sorrows... [can't read -- 35]." Following a published interview with important Pettersson conductor Sergiu Comissiona, Meyer complains of the lack of a "consistently reasonable Pettersson-Exegesis" [presumably untarnished by biographical or medical conditions] and goes on to suggest that "the key to the cipher of understanding a musical work [that is, any musical work] lies [exclusively] in the particular constitution of the listener." Contributing to the vagueness of Pettersson reception, Meyer points out, is the reviewers' emphases on the music's "radical emotionalism", out of control "formal freedom", and "irrational" Swedish character, but, most importantly for disability studies scholars, complains that "His biography is held up so that each dissonance is part of his life story, a concrete trap placing all knowledge on the history of his illness." (37) As a consequence, "Missing from the German biographical literature [on Pettersson] is an example which offers as its recurrent minimal element something other than the constant iteration of illness" (41). What is needed, he writes, is to regard Pettersson's disabilities as simply "biographical fact" rather than "fundamental quality (causation)", aligning such (mis-) understandings with the critical situations of Mahler and Shostakovich, whose music also suffers from such conceptual abuse (42).

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The Sixth Symphony is important evidence to consider for the present project. It is a large single movement testament, and is built around one of Pettersson's Barefoot Songs ('Han ska släcka min lykta'), therefore inviting interpretation due to the presence of (abstracted) text. Michael Kube, also the author of a major monograph on the Eighth Symphony (see below), has written a brief article on the Sixth as well. ['Zu Allan Petterssons 6. Symphonie', in *Allan Pettersson. Texte-Materialien-Analysen*, Hamburg 1994, 137-159.]

Kube 1994 begins immediately by posing the question of the relationship between Biography and Work in Pettersson's output. Musical issues brought up by Kube include:

- the relationship between tonality and atonality (163) \*[use as example]\*
- the technique of developing variation
- formal deformation

Kube makes a point, however, that these technical issues by themselves are not enough to arrive at an adequate understanding of the work. [Retranslate on 164] How might one account for the fact that more than half of the symphony is coda, built on statements of the song (Kube 167)? [Text follows, or see below.]

It should be noted that Meyer, in his booklet notes for the CPO recording of the 'Barefoot Songs', doesn't fail to warn that "The use of the song should not be misunderstood as a reference to programmatic content", but Meyer refrains from suggesting what, if anything, the song might be a reference to. Part three of this study will consider this symphony in some detail taking off on some ideas of Straus in order to pursue this question.

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Peter Revers, in his lengthy study of the Seventh Symphony ['Allan Pettersson: 7. Sinfonie, Melos 46 (1984), 103-125], jumps right into this debate, claiming that Pettersson's biographical (physiological/medical) issues have created "a virtual screen (film) over his musical production", the source of "lack of comprehension on the part of critics." (Revers 1984, 103) Revers stays away from relating the musical events of the Seventh Symphony to Pettersson's visible disability per se, though toward the end of the article he admits that Pettersson's battle "against the terminal thrusts of constantly deteriorating illness and invalidism... is articulated compositionally" for sure in his works. But rather than focusing on the latter biographical (medical) facts, he chooses instead to emphasize a speculative political model for the interpretation of the work's musical events, in effect deflecting attention from the more troublesome physiological issues. This strategy magically transports Pettersson's personal concerns about the suffering of his own body to those broader issues of, indeed, over a decade later, where texts dealing with repression and revolution will serve as material for the 12th Symphony and the Vox Humana cantata. In these works, interestingly, mankind itself is presented as disabled, in fact "misshandelt", another abused body.

Around this time, Pettersson was approached to work with choreographer Birgit Cullberg in the production of a ballet built on the Seventh Symphony. It was produced in 1976 (under the title 'Rapport') by the Stockholm Opera, with the composer's "full approval" (Revers 104). The (rather wild) libretto deals with "[the social] conflict between destitution and affluence", shadowed by the threat of totalitarianism and nuclear annihilation. The production closes with "Poor and Rich moving together through a silver-rimmed aperture headed toward an unknown future or to a unified death" (104).

The synthesizing of this scenario with Pettersson's symphony creates a number of obvious problems regarding the analytical treatment of the musical segment in and of

itself. First, there is no evidence that Pettersson was thinking of any of these specific extramusical issues while composing his work, never mind those suggested by Cullberg's scenario. Their combination, though, importantly suggests a narratological approach to the symphony, which may or may not be useful as an approach to Pettersson's work and its relation to the study of disability in music in general. This will be returned to below. A more serious issue may be Revers' conclusion that the Seventh Symphony belongs in the same historical block with the 12th Symphony and the Vox Humana (104), a notion that is highly problematic. That idea assumes that those works are all primarily "about" social issues, an assertion that may very well deflect the subject of the composer's individual physical disability as a potential generative source.

Specifically musical issues (i.e. Petterssonian characteristics) of this symphony brought up by Revers include:

- use of "forgotten musical elements belonging to the medium of compositional history" (as in Mahler) (104)
- episodes of "suspension" (Mahlerian) (104)
- formal break, rupture, disintegration (104) "out of which emerges fragments of thematic structure" (Mahlerian)
- grand formal architecture (Mahlerian, but also Beethovenian and Schubertian, both, it should be recalled, disabled composers -- 105)
- expression of "dying diminuendo" "in which is expressed the abandonment of the search for an objective, the silencing of musical expression, the final constituent of formal development." (Mahlerian) (104) [Klemm: "[they] come to the truth regarding mankind's impotence..."]
- chromatic-diatonic dualism, and dualism in general: "antithesis as essential fundamental concept" (105)
- developing variation (105), from Pettersson's teachers Honegger and Leibowitz (who got it from Schoenberg, who in turn got it from Brahms, not to mention Wagner, all of whom got it from Beethoven, and so forth)
- repetition and insistence (of the small motivic element), "manic obsession on a specific tone structure" (105)

Revers interestingly posits a "symbiosis of dualistic structural principles and an organic-biological developmental process." (106) This Riemannian-Schenkerian conception [see deep middleground prolongations for the latter's presence, 109, 111] "will [necessarily] be ambiguous..., preformed of the basic stuff of music itself." (106) In other words, in a sense, like Schenker, the foreground [events] and [global] background are inseparable in Pettersson, but related in a state of dualistic and thus contradictory balance. The "biological developmental process" is always under siege (like the diseased body), and the study of these musical tensions may in some way have their source in Pettersson's battle with his disability.

Specifically musical characteristics defined in the work itself pointed out by Revers, possibly but not necessarily relevant to disability studies, include:

- \*opening bars: "a diffuse musical signature that serves as a foreshadowing of thematic contour to come" (106) [structural levels may be deduced by comparing this opening with later more temporally blocked out events, 110 (i.e. "opposition" versus "intermediation").]
- "a barely noticeable figure in the course of development may be set free [NB] as a full-fledged manifestation" (106)
- "tonal thematic lines seem to grow [NB] out of the sound complex" (ex. 2-4) (106)
- derivations in stages [NB] (106)
- "alternating chromatic and diatonic sound fields" (mm. 86 ff.) ["The central organizational principle of this symphony", with "progression toward a tonal payoff" 110] The chromatic sound band of m.141 is referred to as both "paralyzing" [erstarrt] and "totalitarian", 110, and causes "collapse" of the diatonic sound field, at, for example, mm. 121-207, 111. [See discussion of Revers' chart below.] The epilogue of the symphony has a chromatic melody accompanied by the B minor tonal ostinato, with tonality symbolizing **"alike ness" [Gleichheit] and chromaticism symbolizing "difference" [otherness, Anderartigkeit]** (119). There is, however, no payoff. The principle of collapse is always imminent (this is clearly midcentury Nordic existentialism.) (120)
- \*A useful example is mm. 97-102, where "V-i in b minor [is] layered with chromatic interferences, minor ninth shrieks (set symmetrically in 102), and [a] military drum march." (108)
- "tendency toward symmetrical structural principles" (110)
- "disassociation of thematic/motivic structures as structural marker" (110)
- processes of loss [Auflösungsprozess], breakdown: mm. 208ff., 111, "collapse of the chorale-like emphasis" in mm. 238-271ff., completion of collapse on triad (320 or so, need a score), c#-c-b, m. 276-77, as "sound symbol of collapse" [on various levels]; the chorale begins to be "decayed" [zerfallenden] from m. 264 on: = "clippings of mankind's remains." The chorale = "[the] humanitarian basis". (114)
- "Disassociation": a "field" that does not participate in dualistic confrontation (see the post-peripeteia activity m. 512ff. below.

The following observations serve to match up the ballet with the music:

- the "refrain-like trombone triads" symbolize a woman and child [children?] and a grieving man (whose spastic [NB] dance evokes associations with Hiroshima)
- mm. 39 ff. : "two men bring out the corpse of a woman." (109) These "concretized" tonal passages are associated with "grasped menace, hopelessness, annihilation and decomposition of physical existence [NB]" in addition to functioning as "a symbol of the fate of the poor." (116, 119)
- mm. 53-120 : "a symbol... [of] to the grief radioactive fallout will cause." (107)
- m. 302 ("sound explosion") = "the extermination of life, shown scenically by an atomic bomb explosion." Tam Tam rolls = "a sound symbol of death" (114) [fn. 24]

[This might be a footnote:] The following matches up musical events with the personal [use of viola]

mm. 208ff. Instead of the b minor sound field being responsible for the climax, here it is reached by "a [newly] introduced in the viola" [Pettersson's instrument]. (111)

Revers' abstract chart (109) of diatonic vs. chromatic "confrontation" is useful if the white spaces (diatonic) are considered "normate" while the blackened spaces (chromatic) are considered "abnormal" (the reader may insert potential racial overtones if h/she insists), but an application to disability studies seems appropriate. [Example?]

The most extraordinary section of the Seventh Symphony, and the passage that some might say made Pettersson famous, begins at m. 512. It is a stunning episode in F# Major for strings alone, "a show of unbroken adagio-beauty", though Revers points out the "sometimes almost mechanical dislocations of each cycle length" that disrupt the flow beneath the surface (115). In other words, the music flows in such a way that segments can be moved around like blocks without fear of loss of character. Mahler is credited with this technique, particularly in the first movement of his Ninth Symphony (m. 64ff.). There are subtle changes in motivic health in the Pettersson passage as well: for example, f#-d#-c# in quarters becomes f#-e#-c# in halves. The motive suffers, following Revers, "Verlust" (damage). The music "retains, at its core, the character of a hymn" (116), but even though Pettersson's personal relationship to God may be critical (that is, tinged with criticism and defiance), the choice of topic (hymn) is worth consideration in the context of the composer's increasing physical disability. Revers is careful to point out, though, that this passage is, indeed, the "negative highpoint" of the symphony, once its closing section is taken into consideration. In this unforgettable segment, an f#2 is held by the first violins, seemingly for an eternity, while the rest of the ensemble is reduced to "an incoherent [though gentle] sequence of particle-like fragments" and, finally, a series of plagal cadences (forecasting, in fact, the end of Pettersson's Ninth Symphony), and leaving a suggestion of spiritual finality or perhaps a prayer for relief. But this very Denial of completion becomes the "gesture par excellence of the Affirmative", the latter being seen as "a musical abnegation" of an impossibly flawed and damaged world (or perhaps body?) (122). It turns out that, according to Revers, the entire passage winds up constituting "the [very] face of postromantic Adagio beauty -- so brittle (fragile) is the opposition [it faces] to its interior structure...", simply "restrain[ing]... the antithetical catastrophe" which would keep the naïve listener from "the culinary enjoyment of the naked (barelegged) romantic sound bath", enabled solely by its positioning away from "the dynamics of antitheses, reflection (also from the sites of the recipients!) [NB] as 'unwinding of one's own life.'" (122).

Revers' critique of Pettersson's neoromanticism is problematic in its assumption of the composer's agency in such a critique. I submit that it is hard to imagine such a passage being created solely as a form of neo-Adornian deconstructionist criticism, a strategy not only nasty on the part of the composer but disingenuous as well. But indeed speculation on compositional intention remains the great sticking point for the musical disability studies project, and these issues are particularly exposed in this composer's work, as well as in the analytical work devoted to it. Nevertheless, Revers declines to leave the reader-listener with a negative impression. "Meaninglessness and futility are [not] contained in these [Pettersson's] reflections. In their idealist content lies a vague principle of hope...." The work's peripeteia occurs in the central catastrophe, which precipitates at last the redemptive process of the string passage. Might it have been the reality of Pettersson's

personal physical disability that caused the intensity of this vision, intense even beyond the range of politics? In any case, the work, particularly in the strings' "disassociation field", "has been relinquished to the highest dimensions", those dimensions being not only expressions of "the phenomenon of life itself" (122) but "the elementary categories of mankind's coexistence." (123) Perhaps there might be more at stake here than the mere healing of mankind in the abstract; namely, the healing of an individual body in pain (Pettersson's) which may be at least an equally a suffering subject.

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Michael Kube's monograph on the Eighth Symphony [Allan Pettersson: Symphonie Nr.8, Wilhelmshaven 1996] is the largest published study on a single Pettersson symphony to date. Kube identifies his intention right away: to produce a study that "takes into account the biographical-semantic [issues but] puts [related] questions in their proper place", the result following Meyer's prescription in emphasizing "underlying principles of formal design "and "compositional detail" (9). Nevertheless, he admits that only through awareness of "Pettersson's personal biography" can "a preliminary functional context" be drawn, and thus the first portion of the monograph is dedicated to a brief sketch of Pettersson's life. In fact, referring to the appendix of reviews of the Eighth Symphony, Kube expresses hope for "a foundation for building connections between biography (or better: sorrow) and work [that may create a set of workable] Topoi" (10). These concerns are echoed in his previous article on the Sixth Symphony (see above), and in effect modify Meyer somewhat.

But Kube raises the problem of equating "dissonance" with "pain", an equation suggested by the composer himself (see above). Kube dismisses this "confusing metaphor" as "methodical naïveté" interfering with "thorough understanding of the texts" (16), though to be fair Kube admits the importance of Pettersson's commentaries as a "historical source". Kube's problem with Pettersson's medical metaphor is curious, since the Dissonance-Pain equation has been around as long as Western music theory. Perhaps the most interesting analytical challenge is posed by Hans-Klaus Jungheinrich in an article entitled 'Symphonien vom beschädigten Leben' [Musica 49, 1995, 97 -100, cited as Kube footnote 15]: "Pettersson's music allows for dumbed down simplification, characterized as immediate-sounding protocols of agitation, pain, illness and tranquilization. It is about... hitherto truly 'unheard' tone pictures of physical and psychic qualities, of threat, corrosion and destruction (deterioration), but also self-preservation, calm acceptance of disease, consolation, yes, the overcoming of pain (-life?) [...] Composing for Pettersson was definitely an insensible-unconscious attempt at self therapy. A shocking but also paradoxically happy thought: It was through his illness that his creative strength was enormously mobilized." Kube suggests that these items might be useful as "protocols" for Petterssonian analytical descriptors; Simpleminded or not, they could be a portion of a map for a disability studies in music in general, and for Pettersson in particular. But such a project "would assign far-reaching results to chance" (17).

Nevertheless, the conviction remains (at least in the press) that "It is impossible to separate the man from his music in that the physical pain he so long endured finds a

particularly arresting expression in his art" (John van Rhein, Chicago Tribune, 11/30/82) and that the "dark-hued, oppressive tone [of the Eighth Symphony] doubtless [NB] reflect[s] the pain and solitude of his personal life" (Irving Lowens, High Fidelity 30, 1980). More to the musical point, Peter Gülke (in a talk with Meyer; see his article on the Ninth below) notes "short recurring phrases and without pauses, recurring rhythms, accents from which pain shoots out again and again, in merciless ways..." (18). It is these "ways" to which a disability studies in music needs to give attention to.

The central portion of Kube's monograph is a detailed blow-by-blow description of Pettersson's symphony. It is normally left up to the reader to infer expression of disability out of the musical substance Kube describes. Nevertheless, a clear orientation is given in Kube's formal outline of the First Movement, which appears as his Example 1 (24). After presentation of the movement's Main Theme, there is a "Death March", a "Klagegesang" (dirge or complaint song), and, most alarmingly, a "Catharsis Phase with 'Krebs'" (literally "cancer", but that word might be more loosely translated). The Main Theme's "lack of clarity" and "functionally only loosely tonal" harmony (25) might serve as a useful psychological depiction under the circumstances (Kube ventures "under a cloud" and "a haze" as descriptors of effect) (26). Kube's Example 3 (mm. 65-74, 29) shows a fauxbourdon-like passage in the lower strings, over which a disturbing figure in eighth note duplets seems to express physical disturbance (Ab-Ab-B1-Bb1 -- reproduce example). Although Kube does refer to the "close (suffocating) style" and its resemblance to a Death March, that figure is interestingly not discussed, almost as if it is being intentionally avoided.

Instead, Kube focuses on the "contrasting timbres between percussion and strings" as being "a highlight of the movement." The use of percussion (the snare drum in particular) as a biological irritant has a significant predecessor in another great Scandinavian symphony, namely Nielsen's Fifth (movement one) [see Andreas Peer Kähler, Allan Pettersson und Carl Nielsen, in Allan Pettersson. Texte--Materialien--Analysen, Hamburg, 1994, 187-204], while another great symphonist of this time used that same device to express political issues (Shostakovich Seventh, movement one). It would be instructive to know if either of these pieces were in the Stockholm orchestral repertoire, or what contact Pettersson might have had with them (see Symphony 12 below, as well as Revers' discussion of Pettersson's Seventh above, for the political connections). In any event, Kube steers clear of the possible implications of disability in these passages, here as well as in the gory decomposition of the 'Klagegesang' (35 ff.) that follows (38). This is (later) identified as the passage with 'Krebs' (i.e. the "Krebs" of the first 19 bars of the 'Klagegesang'" which "counterpoint" the events of mm. 332-364).

Kube's Example 11 (mm. 418-428) shows a passage which might personalize (physicalize) these events even further. It shows the viola (Pettersson's instrument) playing harshly accented repeated notes doubled with the snare drum, obviously battling against the other layers. Kube points out that the pedal point D in the viola "is not tonal, but percussive" (46) but does not suggest a possible expressive purpose. He also doesn't mention the final diminuendo tremolo in the bass drum, marked "dolce!", a suggestive gesture in this context.

As in the Sixth Symphony, the Eighth's second movement (essentially an introduction, scherzo with development, and coda) is in terms of performance time more than half Coda, only this time that section is a continuation of development of previous materials rather than a quotation of a Barefoot Song (55). At the transition from the introduction into the main body of the "Scherzo" (my term), Kube designates the heavily accented descending minor second in eighth notes at m. 33 a "Seufzermotiv" (his motive b) "that

takes on a recurrent signal-like function in the following sections" (57). Kube does not link this motive to its traditional symbolic function, though he does take pains to posit a similarity between Pettersson's formal procedure (introduction followed by an allegro developing motives from the introduction) and precedents by Haydn (Symphony #92) and Spohr. It bears noting that when the tonic (Ab) is reached, this "Seufzermotiv" "accentuates" what becomes "an ascending 'site of thanks'" [aufsteigende "Seitengedanke"], though once again Kube declines to comment on its possible ramifications to the composer's disability (65, 66). [I need help translating the penultimate sentence of this paragraph, where it speaks of "an ostinato bass model underneath that accords as Krebs from (d)", page 68, mm. 233-251, see Example 20.]

One of the most bloodcurdling passages in the symphony occurs at the opening of the Coda around m. 257 (see his Example 21). Kube describes the character of the orchestration in this passage as "sallow" or "sick" [fahler], presumably describing the widely spaced harmonics and the squeaking octaves in the first violin ("a noisy [geräuschhaftes] Moment"); a "constantly pulsating (throbbing) accompaniment" is heard along with a "grotesque" counterfigure played by the bass clarinet and contrabassoon, designated memorably by Kube as a "broken sign" [aufgebrochene Faktur] [check translation of Faktur, which Leo gives as "invoice". This might be semiotic- speak.] (Kube's motive c). It's hard to think of a more explicit musical depiction of disabling physical pain in the literature, though Kube once again refrains from chancing such a comment (though he does characterize the passage as a "fraying out" [Zerfaserung], especially when the Bb harmonics in triple octaves are accompanied by the "noisy figure" (g)). These events indeed serve as "preparation" for a recapitulation of the Klaggesang at m. 395; the reason for its return seems self-explanatory.

At the culmination's "augmentation of the repetition of motive h in ostentatious quarter notes", the fanfare motive d, marked "solo!" in the percussion is said by Kube to take on a "plea-like [appellartigen] character" [Example 25, pp. 76-77]. A possible reason for the plea is the realization that all "cannot come to an end" (the reason for the Klaggesang's recapitulation), resulting in the "always further deferred formation of closure" in the final section of the coda, despite the striving for a conclusive cadence for over 150 measures. Kube even points to the "centuries old model of descending tetrachords" in the bass ostinato of mm. 518-536 (a traditional death motive). Perhaps this is what the plea was for.

In his Afterword, Kube takes on the accusation that "A compositional-detail-oriented analysis [like his]...passes by the actual content of the music [NB] and reflects solely on formal, compositional-technical and stylistic aspects." "In the case of Allan Pettersson's high-expressive oeuvre one has [traditionally] relied more on [matters of] social misery [Elend] and bodily affliction [körperlichem Leiden], [an approach] earmarked by the biography of the composer [and] oriented more toward a semantic interpretation than an objective examination of the musical structure." Kube locates the problem in Pettersson's own commentaries, which apparently should not be taken seriously since he left not a "single sense of a suggested programmatic draft for his work". Quoting Mahler authority Friedhelm Krummacher (in reference to Mahler), "the understanding of music through

verbal hints of the composer or through semantic decoding of character [may serve to] alleviate deliberation." As with Pettersson, the validity of such interpretations (according to Kube) "[are not] able to be proven in detail and on every work [must be] newly concretized."

The connection between extramusical content in Pettersson has been compared to the situation in Mahler: in fact, Peter Revers has weighed in on the issue in a Mahler Festschrift article [Gustav Mahler und Allan Pettersson, Kassel 1991, 363-373]. It might be fundamentally important to remember that Pettersson's disability was obviously debilitatingly physical, while Mahler's was (at least up until the heart condition at the end of his life) primarily spiritual and intellectual (and Revers warns of "all too general correlations between the works of both composers", Kube 84,fn 34). Revers locates only their "way of living [Gelebtsein] and bald-faced sadness" as commonalities in the end, a conclusion [or is it the entire enterprise that] Kube finds "uncompelling". Attempts at interpretation using extramusical clues will necessarily lead the analyst to have to face "the stigma of arbitrariness", and he or she will in the end be found simply not to take the very notion of "Symphony" seriously given its traditional aesthetic (I guess Berlioz had the same problem). Furthermore, Kube criticizes Pettersson scholar Ivanka Stoianova ['Die Raum-Symphonik von Allan Pettersson', Allan Pettersson Jahrbuch 1986, 17-34] for attributing his "endless melody" and "free developmental form" to "psychic interior stresses", while Kube is satisfied instead to find "astounding nearness to traditional formal models, without direct recurrence of them." (85) Kube's conclusion is that "Allan Pettersson's music allows one to hear and create all sorts of different connotations and contemplate them as one desires [als es gemeinhin scheint]."

Kube includes as an appendix a selection of review excerpts of the symphony, some of which are useful as studies in reception in this context. For example, record critic Hajo Berns, in his review of the Comissiona/DG LP in the German record magazine Fono Forum [July 1980], writes:

"With harrowing expressivity, the psychic [NB] situation of its composer is written into the music... The external life circumstances contributes, yet the feedback of the musical physiognomy on pure biographical facts is always unconvincing [stets unbefriedigend] with Pettersson, not as with Mahler... Depression with Mahler is always gotten through... whereas Pettersson [always] stays within dominantly abnormal (pathological) [krankhaften] dimensions."

It seems that the reviewer finds Pettersson's relentlessness (in this work) "unconvincing" due to its lack of relief, a common feature of chronic illness by definition. American reviewer Irving Lowens, in his review of the same release in High Fidelity [30 (1980), Nr. 11, p. 73], writes of the work's "dark-hued, oppressive tone, doubtless [NB] reflecting the pain and solitude of his personal life." The relationship between [physical] pain and [personal, social] solitude does require separation, though Lowens has no doubt about the relation between the extramusical issues and the work itself. Similarly, John von Rhein, in the Chicago Tribune [November 30, 1982], declares that "It is impossible to separate the man from his music in that the physical pain he so long endured finds a particularly

arresting expression in his art." This writer does not fail to remind us, though, that "Pettersson, in common with other Scandinavian composers of the century, knows more than he tells." That may very well be a useful way to regard the art (not to mention life) of the Disabled.

In terms of its ultimate usefulness, the reviewer of *Die Welt* [May 18, 1994] paraphrases the composer in that "in the sorrow of his lonely existence the sorrow of mankind may be recognized" (one might revise that as "in the sorrow of disability the sorrow of mankind may be recognized"). The excerpt closes with the narcissistic suggestion that this is a sample of "composition as self therapy", probably applicable to all art at some level, but especially explicit in a case such as this.

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Peter Gülke, in his comparatively impressionistic article on the Ninth Symphony ['Protest, Vergeblichkeit, verweigerte Resignation: Gedanken beim Studium von Allan Petterssons Neunter Sinfonie' (Protest, Futility, Denied Resignation: Thoughts on the Study of Allan Pettersson's Ninth Symphony), *Das Orchester* 1/95, 7-11] locates the work's "character and 'morality'" in a politically committed, defiant existentialism (Gülke,7). The author considers the piece along with other Ninths (Beethoven's, Bruckner's, Mahler's, Shostakovich's) in the light of their conformation to the number's valedictory Mythos (its status as a "Late Work" signifier). It seems that Gülke rejects that numerological symphonic myth not only for Pettersson but for all the rest as well: for Beethoven the Ninth was merely a "(way) station", Bruckner never even finished his, Mahler wound up writing a Tenth, Shostakovich thumbed his nose at the very idea ("deliberately"), and Pettersson wrote six more along with several other significant works, in spite of his formidable physical problems. In fact, all of the composers mentioned were disabled in some manner: Beethoven (deafness), Bruckner (age), Mahler (heart condition), and some might feel justified including Shostakovich in this company due to the disabling political oppression he endured. If the latter is considered a disability equivalent in some way to actual physical disability, we might be able to understand disability as a metaphor inclusive of societal malfunctions as well as the traditional physiological manifestations. This could explain Pettersson's turn to Neruda and Third World poets in what I have termed his "Intermezzo" period, though some might consider this view problematic. Be that as it may, this is the only point in Gülke's essay that specifically addresses Pettersson's physical disability.

Nevertheless, Pettersson embraces the Mythos anyway by writing what amounts to the largest single unbroken movement in symphonic history (8), a procedure initiated by Schoenberg's op. 9 Chamber Symphony. Pettersson blows up the continuous multi-movement structure even further by minimizing the coherence of the individual segments by including "associated encounters that are opposed to [each movement type]". The "symphonic process" thus permits "segmentation and editing". Coherence, when desired (which is not necessarily always) is often found through the tool of the repeating ostinato, which Gülke interestingly describes as having "a nearly physical menacing force" (8). The effect is painted as "a blind loping through the world coexisting with the possibilities

of catastrophe" (9). These ostinatos, then, might be interpreted as an expression of the stifling imprisonment felt as a matter of course in the lives of the physically immobile. (In Pettersson's case, this imprisonment was not only physical at the time, but literal: He lived in a Stockholm walk up apartment, and literally could not leave his residence. Is it possible that these biographical conditions would not have a significant effect on Pettersson's music?)

The imprisonment metaphor continues with the notion of competing gravitational tonal centers ("E minor, later Bb and F minor... nearly lying on top of each other -- peeling themselves away as gravitational centers, soon also as fixations, whose music... cannot escape ." (9)). Imprisonment may as well be considered a consequence of structural compression: "as symphonic dimensions excessively contract, the [music] can no longer breathe through the demands of suffocating tectonic compression." (9) Could Pettersson's disability have dictated on some level his structural strategies?

Gülke points out the work's length as a sort of reaction against imprisonment: "He appears not to be able to stop -- what closeness between music and existence! -- because behind the last tone of nothingness horror lies." (9) This imprisonment is given a political and social metaphor by Gülke when he concludes that for Pettersson "lagom" (the Swedish word for 'just right' or 'balanced') "may never be". The same term also has a connotation of "caution" and, worst of all, the "treading [of] a hopefully disinterested tolerance... that has little ear for insistent questions and calls to Cassandra, and [which] formulates easily a stamp on the mischief maker, a Company which is sworn to the solubility of its problems and where art (i.e. the practice of every unsolvability) is existentially not required." (10) This reality is, according to Gülke, the source of Pettersson's "Protest", and it seems his awareness of this social disability outweighs, or at least complements, his medical condition. One might be obligated to consider the operations of this complementation in musical terms.

Pettersson's Protest, according to the author, extends to spiritual matters and their public administrators as well. The Symphony ends with a lengthy unharmonized Canto (Peter Ruzicka's term), followed by a homely plagal cadence in what has emerged as the parallel major, a Picardy third relation coming from what Gülke suggests might reference a "repentance-ish minor: how foolish!" [is repentance, I presume.] (11) He concludes in the end that the passage "stands within a long compositional tradition, that not all is do-able [manageable], that we can't play our self-indulgent games to the end... As if he [Pettersson] would say, as old Heidegger did in his last interview: 'Only God can help us.'" (11) How much this provocative ending is political in nature and how much is disability related may never be answered for certain, but the imposition of this marker in the context of this work needs to be considered carefully, as well as how it is prepared (or not) over the course of the movement's unprecedentedly lengthy narrative. It is also noteworthy that the author actually writes around the composer's physical condition, which surely must have played a significant role in the day-to-day existence that surrounded the creation of the work.

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Pettersson's nine-month long hospitalization due to nephritis provided the environment for the creation of both 10th and 11th Symphonies. No extended studies of these works exist at this time to my knowledge, but Pettersson did provide an introduction to the score of the 10th which bears quoting here:

"The angel of death is a hypocritical poetic figure. Death has nothing to do with mercifulness, because he casually randomizes the strong relation between sadness and sickness, especially when the antipole, the strength to live, is weak. The aim is life, not death. When he comes, he comes like a national decree. I cannot accept him, he doesn't go together with my will to live. Death, my constant shadow, is stronger yet than I. Or is it He himself, God, with whom I as a man experiment with in another life form?" [in Kube 1996, fn. 10, translation mine.]

Since this passage is literally attached to the symphony proper (and by extension the 11th Symphony as well), and the symphony was written under dire medical circumstances, in which Pettersson reports staring death constantly in the face, it would seem to strain credulity to avoid identifying musical tropes of strength, weakness, illness, life, and death, perhaps in the same way one would approach any romantic tone poem. This activity would seem essential for a project linked to the study of disability in music.

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The only study of a late Pettersson symphony to my knowledge as of this writing is Peter Ruzicka's "'...Cantando...': Bemerkungen zum Spätwerk Allan Petterssons am Beispiel der Fünfzehnten Symphonien", [citation], 204-210. As may be typical of late works (see Straus), this work has "strong lyrical emanation and [is] free of the crude [Grell]-dissonance of the preceding [late] works [those from 10 onwards, but the dense overwriting typical of Pettersson's late works might be oppressively dissonant to some]." (Ruzicka 204) Ruzicka makes a point of stating that "Musical expression must come first for Pettersson, beyond any other parameters", and points to the technique of developing ("permanent") variation as the work's main structural agent. Ruzicka points to Bruckner as source for the string tremolandos, the rhythmic ostinatos over the long drawn out climaxes, and the many pauses and ritards, and Mahler, for the interpolated "Cantando" passages recalling, as Ruzicka hears them, the ubiquitous Ninth Symphony (see Gülke's comments on the "Ninth Mythos" above). Perhaps most importantly for the disability studies perspective, Ruzicka notes that "the Melos becomes [eventually] unstable" due to the addition of "great interval spans" (209), followed, however, by "a grand statement". In fact, the listener is put into a disabled position himself, by being forced to hear redemption through the morass Pettersson presents (see discussion of the Second Violin Concerto below). Ruzicka interprets this Canto as Pettersson's inner world [Innenwelt], [his] sorrow, love, and hope", a manifestation of insulation [Aussenwelt] and "the way of the world" [Weltlauf -- apparently untranslatable; world-weariness? world-knowledge?]. Ruzicka points to the Canto as "unquestionably" representing Pettersson, like Mahler "sunk in remembrance and floating away over the line" until "Finally the music comes to rest", "transcending [canceling] time" (210). Similar to the repetition of the Barefoot

Song in the Sixth Symphony, this Canto "plays on six times" (or 10), but by the time we reach the final statement, all that is left is the piccolo [not alone, it seems], as playing out the "ragged remains" (Abnutzungsspuren), a "music of the self" revealed here, most significantly, as in a "mirror".

[As an addendum to be added later, it should be noted that Ruzicka, like Kube, calls for sketch studies as a means for future serious study of Pettersson's work.]

### III.

It would seem that Pettersson's works involving texts that are placed into an abstract symphonic process would be viable starting points for the introduction of his work into a Disability Studies model. The Sixth Symphony, written after his rheumatoid arthritis became a truly disabling force, is based on the emergence of the Barefoot Song 'Han ska släcka min lykta' ('He can put out my little light'), text by the composer following:

I stretch out, I lie flat out  
in my fresh white shirt --  
there: HE nears through the corridor,  
a foreigner to no door.  
I want to stand up well  
to tie my shoes  
but must find HIM  
goggle-eyed there in the mirror.  
HE can put out my little light  
so that I see nothing;  
HE can smash my little bell  
so that I hear nothing.  
More no one can guess,  
though one may perhaps wish it,  
if wishes are still to be advised,  
for one pale and face-to-face with Death.

(Translation Andreas K.W. Meyer, booklet for recording with Manfred Trojahn, CPO 999 134, p. 21)

Recall that the Barefoot Songs were written well before Pettersson's disability became manifest. This text, at that time, seemed to refer to a synthesis of his hated, abusive father and another Father of equally ominous bearing. The choice of highlighting this text abstractly as goal of the Sixth Symphony, now from the point of view of a victim with a crippling, career ending disability, certainly gives the song an intensified dimension.

[to be continued... (?)]