

Abstract

The subject of the presented paper is Scruton's concept of musical meaning. The research is based on analysis of Scruton's critique of semiotic attitudes towards the problem of musical significance. From the semiotic point of view, music is regarded as a sign. On this basis, the meaning of music is described as a relation: music signifies by reference to something other than itself. Musical semiotics analyzes forms of this semantic relation and determines the nature of musical significance. Scruton's concept is built in opposition to this theory. Its presupposition is an a-semantic relation of musical significance, which is grounded in the listener's metaphorical experience of music. The musical meaning is not to be given by semantic relation but it is heard by the listener in the music itself. Thanks to this, Scruton states the meaning of music is found only in the musical structure. In order to achieve successful formulation of Scruton's concept, it is necessary to analyze his particular critiques of the semiotic attitudes towards meaning of music. In this analysis, on the one hand Scruton's reasons why he denies semiotic approach towards research of musical significance will be clarified, on the other hand his asemiotic concept of the meaning of music will be presented and illuminated. The main aim of the paper is to show how Scruton thinks about the problem of musical significance by following these critiques and formulates his own concept of musical meaning. The paper is divided into four thematic sections. The first section is focused on explanation of general semiotics and Scruton's attitude towards that. The second section deals with Scruton's theory of aesthetic experience in music. The third section follows Scruton's arguments against selected semiotic theories and determines how these critiques affect Scruton's own concept. The last section summarizes and explains Scruton's concept of musical meaning.