GESTALT THEORY IN FINLAND
PhD Jaana Vainio-Utriainen 29.9.2012
GTA Finland
GESTALT THEORY: MOVEMENTS FROM EUROPE [1890] 1910, TO USA, ITALY, ASIA, FINLAND
GESTALT THEORY IN FINLAND
EUROPEAN MOVEMENT (GERMAN) 1920’s…
AMERICAN MOVEMENT (ENGLISH) 1930’s…
HISTORICAL BACKGROUND &
AUTHOR’S DEVELOPMENT OF GESTALT THEORETICAL RESEARCH 1-4
First Gestalt philosophical essay *On Gestalt Qualities* 1890
Christian von Ehrenfels

- Gestalt is something more than a sum of its components, and situated above the [musical] elements

- Several German cultural and musical writings, and dramas based on Wagner’s music

- Affected mainly in Europe, not in Finland
GESTALT PSYCHOLOGY 
BERLIN SCHOOL "GESTALT AS A WHOLE" [1912]

- Berlin school and first orig. gestalt psychological writings:
  - Wertheimer 1910: *Music der Wedda*
  - Köhler 1929: *Gestalt psychology*
  - Koffka 1935a: *Principles of Gestalt psychology*

- Affected multiple ways in Finland in 20th century:
in psychology, education, arts, maths, language and technology

- Gestalt laws are still quoted in the 21st century sciences: e.g. Prägnanz: similarity, good figure, law of simplicity, whole-parts, ground-figure

- => Gestalt theory is a historical basis in different sciences
Gestalt psychology in Finland [1923]

- Prof. Eino Kaila and Kai von Fieandt in Helsinki University were the main Finnish gestalt psychologists in 1920’s.

- Kaila’s writings: The structure of soul 1923, The modern idea of the world* 1929, and Personality* 1929 and

- Von Fieandt’s writings: Gestaltpsychology *1950 and The world of Perception* 1962 consisted gestalt theoretical views.

* written in Finnish, author’s translations
Kai Karma’s book The basics of music psychology* (1986) consists of orig. gestalt theoretical views to music, and

Jukka Louhivuori’s ed. book Cognitive musicology * (1992) consists of modern gestalt theoretical views to music

Gestalt art psychologist Rudolf Arnheim’s books belongs to the reading list of Finnish Universities mainly in visual arts

* written in Finnish, author’s translation in English
Art was the basis of Gestalt theory: music, poems, writings, visual arts
Gradual thesis 2002: Gestalt Psychological Music Analysis Theory and Method GMA*

Aims to generate a music analysis method (audible and visual) applied to Japanese Shakuhachi flute music (signs)

Spectral and formula theory adapted to gestalt psychological theories (Berlin school)

Main foundings
- Sonogram = visual representation
- Formulas = structural whole and part

Gestalt theory was suitable in interpretation combining visual and audible perception of music

* in Finnish, author’s translation
GMA Method

Cultural Gestalt (Japan and its music = ground)

WHOLE gestalt: Audible and visual (spectral) figure

PARTS (formulas)

Gestalt laws

Results and Interpretation
Dissertation thesis 2005:  
*A Gestalt Music Analysis. Philosophical Theory, Method, and Analysis of I. Reznikoff’s compositions*

Developed from GMA: Formula Circle, Gestalt Quality, levels of consciousness and spectral analysis (computer as representation of mind)

Gestalt Music Analysis

- Creation gestalt analysis
- Perception gestalt analysis
- Comparison gestalt analysis

*The Gestalt, 3rd dimension*
A Gestalt Music Analysis
Philosophical Theory, Method, and Analysis of Igor Reznikoff’s Compositions
Findings macro and microlevel (Reznikoff):

- Gestalt quality, or 3rd Dimension of music was found audible and visually from sonogram in transition to vowel **u to a**

- Composer’s creativity was seen ”visible” and interpreted in the **Formula circle** (30% Fe formulas, creative)

- ”Creative source or Genetic formula” was found in the sonogram **83 Hz (looping phenomenon)**

- Perception analysis revealed listeners’ images of the chants

- Comparison analysis: harmonic chants - gregorian chants
GESTALT PHIL. ANALYSIS METHOD AND FINDINGS

FORMULA CIRCLE

Formula levels of consciousness (Fa-Ff)

SUPER-CONSCIOUS FORMULA LEVEL
Fa  melismatic formula

CONSCIOUS FORMULA LEVEL
Fb  neumatic formula
Fc  syllabic formula
Fd  mixed formula

UNCONSCIOUS FORMULA LEVEL
Fe  unexpected formula level
Fd  unconscious formula

Proto self

GESTALT QUALITY, 3rd dimension: audible perception and visual representation[u to a]
83 Hz "GENETIC FORMULA"
= Creative impuls with
(Looping phenomenon)
Post-doc research 2007: Uuno Klami’s song compositions. Gestalt theoretical research and discoveries*

Aims to find all Klami’s song compositions and adapt GMA method to ”traditional ” note/score analysis

Analysis method: SOUND SPACE analysis,
macro and microanalytical level:

- Melody gestalt and Ground melody
- Dynamic gestalt
- Rhythmic gestalt and Ground rhythm
- Accompany gestalt
- Creative gestalt process

* In Finnish, author’s translation
Dynamic gestalt

Key gestalt

Accompaniment gestalt

SOUND SPACE
KLAMI’S SONG COMPOSITIONS
FINDINGS

KLAMI’S SONG COMPOSITIONS

**Key gestalt**: 82% major key

**Dynamic gestalt**: ”mountain gestalt” 25% and increasing gestalt 25%

**Ground melody**: variations 40%, steady/even 38%

**Ground rhythm**: steady/even 52%

**First quarter/part** of the whole sound space consisted most important musical phenomenon of composer’s creativity
Non-fictional manuscript 2012

CONTENT (Finnish):
All chapters consist 1-3 original articles translated in Finnish**

1. Introduction
2. Gestalt theory and arts
3. Gestalt philosophy
4. Gestalt psychology
5. Gestalt art psychology
6. Bauhaus & New Bauhaus
7. Gestalt theory in art education
8. Gestalt pedagogy and Didactics
9. Gestalt therapy and arts
10. Discussions

** translations in progress
AUTHOR’S ROLE AND INTEREST IN GESTALT THEORY

GESTALT THEORETICAL EXPERIMENTS IN MUSIC AND ART EDUCATION: exciting methods, results and interpretation, cognitive view to music and art

MAIN RESULTS AND FUTURE RESEARCH:
- Genetic formula Fg and creative formula Fe
- Formula circle => representation of process of creative mind

NON-FICTIONAL WRITING:
- C. von Ehrenfel’s musical and cultural writings
- Bauhaus artists and Gestalt theoretical development
- R. Arnheim’s experiments and lectures in Harvard
THANK YOU FOR YOUR INTEREST

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Esitelmässäni valotan joitakin hahmoteoreettisia tieteellisiä jatkotutkimuksiani (2002-2009). Tutkimusnäkökulmani alkoit pohdinnoista: mitä on hahmoteoria ja miten taiteen/musiikin luovaa prosessia voi analysoida ja tulkita hahmoteoreettisessa kontekstissa?


Ohessa liitteenä symposiumin esitelmäkaavioit (Power Point 29.9.2012)