Has Structure Any Meaning in Computer Music?
Hans Lunell

The duality or apparent conflict between structure and meaning in music has been of prime importance in the philosophy and aesthetics of music. The questions that are raised are typically phrased as "Has music a meaning?" or "What does this music mean?" When we move from conventionally composed and performed music to computer music these questions are carried on further in questions such as: "Is it possible for music produced by or with a computer to have a meaning?" or the question in the title of this paper. It is found that such questions lead directly to fundamental issues in computer science and artificial intelligence, as well as the classical philosophical problems. This paper surveys and analyzes different approaches to these and related questions, and it is argued that the answers we obtain are both "yes" and "no" depending on in what way computers are used, from which angle computer music is viewed, and to what extent we are willing to assign meaning to music composed and performed with conventional means.