

On *l'absolue nécessité d'écrire*: Making Sense of Music in Christian Gailly, Paola Capriolo, and Anna Smaill

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This dissertation focuses on the ways in which characters in Christian Gailly's *K.622*, Paola Capriolo's *Il pianista muto*, and Anna Smaill's *The Chimes* make sense of music and relate it to language. When Gailly and Capriolo recur to the instrument of language in order to account for one's musical experience, they are immediately faced with the semantic autonomy of music in relation to language, their primary tool of expression. By contrast, in Smaill's dystopian novel, music initially functions as the main expressive tool that took over words, and is used for everyday communication before the characters come to recognise the importance of the written word. This dissertation discusses the progress in Gailly, Capriolo and Smaill from the protagonists' initial frustrations to "translate" music into words, towards their attempts to express the irreducible essence of music through language-related analogies and metaphors. While the limits of language consistently place them at points of tension on the ultimate untranslatability of music, they all eventually come to realise *l'absolue nécessité d'écrire*.