

ARTIST REACTION AND THE EVOLUTION OF MUSIC

SUMMARY

Artist Reaction: How an artist reacts to his circumstances and times - seen throughout music/art (and human) history, there are many ways a person can approach life and its particular set of circumstances it presents - when I began this investigation I was looking for “genius” reactions, which I found were more diverse than I thought. For example, a composer could steep himself in the technology of the day, innovate with it, become a symbol of it (Futurists, electronic music, rap) - or react strongly against it (transcendentalists, “back to Bach”, acoustic folk music etc.). “New Complexity” vs. minimalism - either way presents a strong aesthetic. The artist himself, when seen objectively, is a “specific morphology”, spawned from combination of “artist parameters”.

Generalization/New Style significance:

NS:

My relationship with NS	In mature/Socratic aspect, each reification could have a different artist strategy
The “politics” of NS	Real world action/heroism in NS

Generalization:

All ways a composer can act in light of personal/social conditions (determined in retrospect?)
 Time: at a certain time, the options for a composer (strategies in light of time and timeliness)
 Ways a composer interacts with and uses *meaning*, derived from the external world
 Predetermined paths to go with or against (all cliché?)
 Indirectness/relatedness of artist to a particular historical moment - at the thinnest, composer is related to every event
 The full spectrum of ways to be “political”/involved
 + Negative generalization: no...

Concept In Relation to the Composer – concepts as manifestation of personal/social conditions

How is a composer’s frame of mind, social condition, personal condition (etc.) reflected in their choice of subject?

What are the ways that these conditions manifest themselves?

level of indirectness “conceptual metaphor”

Looks like a sort of “organized” task based composing?

...each one has its own “political” implication

Even retreat or escapism makes a statement

Challenges the notion of what is “revolutionary” and “conservative” in art

“Source matters” - the context of who the artist is = central to the impact of their decision

(i.e. Beethoven withdrawing into the quartets after composing heroic works)

Options for a composer/artist:

Direct confrontation

Confront using current subject matter (literal)

Confront using past subject matter to indirectly draw a metaphor “Loaded subject matter” Subversive

Outward protest Exploring complexities Satire

Glorify/extol the virtue of something under fire in society

Teach a “moral”

...that is lacking in a society

...that reflects a society, agree/cement its virtues Propaganda for a specific cause

Retreat Escapism Rejection of current social values Embrace current social values

Nostalgia (focus on a past condition)

Irreverence

Personal interest (ignoring social conditions)

Religion Personal heritage, nationalism

Explore/feature something you lack, a world you don’t belong to, etc.

Entering the dialogue about a universal issue (love, sex, “the artist”, nature of man, politics, etc.) - but colored by personal/social views

Abstract: ignore anything extramusical/external, focusing on the properties of the art itself

(Where personal conditions and emotions subconsciously enter the art, or are “read into” the art by others)

Create music to advocate or resist certain artistic practices

Objectivism: subject matter/treatment doesn’t reflect your views

Use of it for pure “effect” Use it for a specific function/event (Hindemith)

Choose a story because you identify with the character - because it represents your situation etc.

Channel the social climate, using the most modern aesthetic values

Quote or utilize the most popular style of the day

Embrace the hated, exalt the hated

EVOLUTION OF MUSIC

Generalization/New Style significance:

NS:

Reification strategies, approaches

Generalization

History of music as such (past/present/future)

Viewed in terms of individuals and their actions

All ways a composer can impact the history and evolution of music ("options") (determined in retrospect?)

Time: at a certain time, the options for a composer (strategies in light of time and timeliness)

Spectrum of involvement in music

Predetermined paths to go with or against (all cliché?)

The greatest composer would do all? The omni/meta-composer? (Bach breadth)

Also: normative musicianship goals

A checklist of genius tasks in music

+ Negative generalization: no...

Ways music has expanded, and ways it typically expands

Ways artists find their own identity

Lanes of innovation

Composer chooses to have a "personal language": will inevitably be different than any other composer (Beethoven, late style)

Composer rejects popular opinion or the opinion of others and composes completely for their self

Composer develops a personal, idiosyncratic aesthetic

Composer rejects current "modern" aesthetics, instead resurrects aesthetic values of previous era(s) ("Neo" movements, Gluck/classical values)

Composer resurrects a certain technique/performance practice (jazz resurrecting improvisation)

Composer defends a certain school/idea in light of new trends (Brahms)

Composer retreats into a tradition

Composer rejects a norm/traditional conception of an aspect of music,

and must offset a loss of the aspect's traditional benefits with innovation/developing a surrogate perspective

Serialism (rejects tonality), total serialism (rejects traditional compositional process)

John Cage (rejects performance norms, ideas of what is music), organic rhythm works (rejects the order of regular meter)

minimalism (rejects structural/tonal complexity), percussion works (rejects melody, harmony concerns)

Debussy (rejects diatonicism, form), Carter (rejects synchronization of musicians)

Sound-artists (rejecting meaning other than pure sound)

Composer reverses assumptions about a particular aspect of music, composes from there

Composer purposefully rejects certain complexities of art (Debussy w/ formal modulation/structure, Satie), instead develops a more intimate style

Composer rejects "artificial" aspects for realism/seriousness (Gluck's reformations, Wagner's opera hall performance rules, Verismo opera)

Composer rejects seriousness and opts for artificiality/humor (Satie, Poulenc, Cage) (or exalts humor)

Composer purposefully rejects the full spectrum of choice available (Chopin's piano-exclusivity, modernity's tendency to small ensemble)

(Satie's white key music, restriction to certain scales/intervals, forms etc.)

Composer comes as sharp contrast to the style of the day, leads in changing the trend in his direction (Schoenberg, Stravinsky)

Composer amplifies an element within music to a new height, explores it over a period (Stravinsky w/ rhythm, Bach w/ counterpoint)

Composer uses this distorted style in multiple works of differing scales and challenges, showing its range

Composer uses a particular detail or idiosyncrasy more frequently

Composer develops a new system to compose music with, becomes advocate for it

Their music becomes an example of this possibilities (Schoenberg's 12 tone)

Composer possesses a larger/deeper vision for an existing style, makes profound works with an established style (Bach, Mozart)

Composer synthesizes a style into a coherent language, develops it to its peak (the Classicists)

Composer humanizes a style to make emotionally moving works

Composer possesses a vision that can only be accomplished with a leap/innovation/change in current style (Wagner and opera/drama)

Composer possesses an extramusical vision/story (Wagner's homeland, Beethoven's struggle, Bach's religion, Scriabin's total-experience music)

(Composer becomes identified with/symbolic of extramusical ideas)

Composer sees outside current perception of what is possible in music

Composer breaks a certain rule

Composer challenges what is considered music (Cage, Stockhausen)

Composer is unprecedented virtuoso on an instrument, and therefore makes extremely difficult/complex works (virtuoso works)

(Liszt, Alkan, Bach, etc.)

Composer frequently tries new ideas through experimental works

Composer seeks new ways to use an instrument (Debussy and pedal, modern extended technique)

Composer composes for an underused/underrated instrument

Composer composes in a new medium (Stockhausen, Boulez)

Composer writes for new instruments

Composer invents new instruments

Composer becomes advocate for a composer from the past (Mendelssohn/Bach, Neo-classicists/neo-baroque)

Composer becomes advocate for a perceived “low music” and exalts it, forcing its inclusion as serious music (Bartok, Vaughan Williams = folk)

Composer creates high art in a “people’s” genre (Gershwin, Weil/Ellington/Evans in jazz, Herrmann w/ movie music, Beatles in pop music etc.)

Composer makes works that resonate culturally, in collective memories of a culture