

Addicted to Beauty:
Piano Music from Poetry

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Abstract

This thesis consists of a suite of four piano pieces written by Joannie Ing as inspired and guided by poetry. It provides an explanation and analysis of the work from the composer's point of view. *Addicted to Beauty* includes a discussion on music, poetry and aesthetics as related to Ing's music; more importantly, the thesis explores and applies these aesthetic principles in the larger realm of classical contemporary music in order to contemplate the *value* of the artist and her art to society.

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Chapter 1: Discussion of Music, Poetry, and Aesthetics

What is *music*, and what is *poetry*? More importantly, what precisely is the *beauty* of music and poetry? What happens when the two arts, music and poetry, are brought together? Is there a relationship between music and poetry? What are the aims and purposes of each art? Can one art be translated aesthetically into another? Through a variety of interesting speakers, this thesis will open with a discussion of music, poetry and aesthetics, particularly in context of my piano music inspired by poetry.

There are many possible genres to consider when approaching music: in this case, it is *classical contemporary music* that is the genre in question. In relation to the thesis topic, it is most appropriate to consider music as an *art* form, with sound broken down into tones and silences whose aims are essentially aesthetic.¹ Music is a collection of sound material exhibiting tonal organization.² Philosophy professor Jerrold Levinson describes music as “the practice of organizing sound for the purpose of enriching and intensifying experience through active engagement – listening, dancing, performing – with the sounds regarded primarily... as sounds.”³

Music as an art form has deep roots in ancient history. In Greek mythology, one recalls the character Orpheus and his mesmerizing abilities with the lyre and voice, for “with his songs, Orpheus, the bard of Thrace, allured the trees, the savage

1. Andy Hamilton, *Aesthetics and Music* (Continuum International Publishing Group, 2007), 11-12.

2. Ibid., 52.

3. Ibid., 52-3.

animals, and even the insensate rocks, to follow him.”⁴ In the Old Testament of the Bible, there is the tale of David, who played beautiful harp music and calmed the evil spirit which tormented King Saul.⁵ Throughout history, music was a very prevalent part of everyday society: it was used in hymns and offerings for festivals, feasts, and rituals; music was part of leisure and entertainment; it was also a well-known moral and didactic tool.⁶ Plato and Aristotle wrote extensively on treating music and dance as elements of both lyric and dramatic poetry.⁷

In his opening address to the parents of freshmen at the Boston Conservatory in 2004, director Karl Paulnack speaks of music in relation to the ancient Greeks:

...the Greeks said that music and astronomy were two sides of the same coin. Astronomy was seen as the study of relationships between observable, permanent, external objects, and music was seen as the study of relationships between invisible, internal, hidden objects. Music has a way of finding the big, invisible moving pieces inside our hearts and souls and helping us figure out the position of things inside us...

Music is one of the ways we make sense of our lives, one of the ways in which we express feelings when we have no words, a way for us to understand things with our hearts when we cannot with our minds.⁸

In liberal arts education dating back to the Middle Ages, music was part of the *quadrivium* (Latin), a curriculum consisting of arithmetic, astronomy, geometry and music.⁹ While the Greeks saw arithmetic as an ‘internal, theoretical’ representation

4. Publius Ovidious Naso, “Death of Orpheus” from Book 11 of *Metamorphosis*, trans. by Brookes More, (Boston Cornhill Publishing Co., 1922).

5. 1 Samuel 16:23 (NIV) reads, “Whenever the spirit... came upon Saul, David would take his harp and play. Then relief would come to Saul; he would feel better, and the evil spirit would leave him.”

6. Hamilton, *Aesthetics and Music*, 11.

7. Ibid., 16.

8. Karl Paulnack, *Welcome Address*, The Musicians of the Columbus Symphony, September 1, 2004. <<http://www.bostonconservatory.edu/s/940/Bio.aspx?sid=940&gid=1&pgid=1241>>.

9. Otto Willmann, “The Seven Liberal Arts”, *The Catholic Encyclopedia*, Vol. 1, <<http://www.newadvent.org/cathen/01760a.htm>>.

of numbers, geometry was the ‘external, physical’ representation of numbers. A similar relationship exists between astronomy and music: while astronomy is a sort of ‘external’ version of locating moving objects, positions and influences, so music is considered an ‘internal’ version of the same thing. In relation to his understanding of the Greek’s liberal arts and the *quadrivium*, and after having played at roughly a thousand concerts and watching the effects of music on his audiences, Paulnack writes, “After a while, if you watch for it, you can actually see people’s planets move. At least that’s the way I would describe what I’m observing and experiencing time after time.”¹⁰ Surely, if music as an external sound force has the potential to move ‘people’s planets’, it is a powerful art form deserving further contemplation.

1.1 Music as a Language

In a love letter from Robert Schumann to his beloved Clara, he writes of passion at the piano and how “music is, above all, the language of the soul.”¹¹

Music is often regarded as a language, or at the very least as having language-like properties, in that it is able to communicate and express something valuable, even if that something is often inexpressible in words. Kramer describes music’s ability to maintain a dialogue with language – as an equal though not quite an equivalent to language. And though it appears to have all the functions of language, it is a language that lacks an objective vocabulary:

10. Paulnack, email message to Ing, May 4, 2009.

11. Edward Lippman, *The Philosophy and Aesthetics of Music* (Nebraska: University of Nebraska Press, 1999), 8.

Music has historically maintained a prolific dialogue with language, even though, like all music, it is supposed to work, and does work, at levels above or below language, even when the music, being sung, uses language with great expressive power. One of the most remarkable features of classical music is the way it always seems to teeter on the edge of speech. We can never know just what it – almost —says, but we can harmonize our words with its sounds in ways worth hearing.¹²

In the same way, late 19th-century German philosopher Eduard Hanslick discusses music as an abstract and intellectual language consisting of sounds with form, though with no *definitive* form. Most notably, music is a unique language that is understood but not translatable:

The term ‘form’ in musical language is peculiarly significant. The forms created by sound are not empty; not the envelope enclosing a vacuum, but a well, replete with the living creation of inventive genius. Music, then, as compared with the arabesque, is a picture, yet a picture the subject of which we cannot define in words, or include in any category of thought. In music there is both meaning and logical sequence, but in a musical sense; it is a language we speak and understand, but which we are unable to translate.¹³

Early 19th-century German philosopher Arthur Schopenhauer discusses music in his most influential work, “The World as Will and Representation” (1818), and hints at the Romantic metaphysical nature of music as the ‘language above languages.’¹⁴ He argues that all things have a ‘willing’ that is essential in one’s nature: that is, there is an unconscious striving resulting from being in a state of constant unfulfillment for which the aesthetic experience provides a temporary

12. Lawrence Kramer, *Why Classical Music Still Matters* (California: University of California Press, 2009), 5.

13. Eduard Hanslick, *The Beautiful In Music: A Contribution To The Revisal Of Musical Aesthetics* (Kessinger Publishing, 2006), 70-71.

14. Andy Hamilton, *Aesthetics and Music* (Continuum International Publishing Group, 2007), 76.

escape. In support of music is a 'language above languages', he suggests that music expresses something profoundly beyond mankind's realm of understanding:

In a language intelligible with absolute directness, yet not capable of translation into ... our faculty of reason, [music] expresses the innermost nature of the world, and expresses the profoundest wisdom in a language that his reasoning faculty does not understand.¹⁵

And though music is in many ways beyond the realm of human understanding, Schopenhauer insists that it is a special art because music expresses an unconscious desiring that plagues the human race: in other words, music expresses the *will's objectivity*.

...music differs from all the other arts by the fact that it is not a copy of the phenomenon, or, more exactly, of the will's adequate objectivity, but is directly a copy of the will itself, and therefore expresses the metaphysical to everything physical in the world, the thing-in-itself to every phenomenon.¹⁶

A similar sentiment is also echoed by Nietzsche, who suggests the beauty of music is not "a copy of the phenomenon but an immediate copy of the will itself, and therefore complements everything physical in the world and every phenomenon by representing what is metaphysical"¹⁷: in other words, music does not merely *imitate* the sense of desiring but, in essence, embodies *desire* itself.

Music, through a modernist perspective, retains its role as a language through which elements can be organized to have meaning and purpose. Twentieth-century German philosopher and social critic Theodor Adorno writes:

15. Ibid., 77.

16. Edward Lippman, *The Philosophy and Aesthetics of Music* (Nebraska: University of Nebraska Press, 1999), 75.

17. Ibid., 79.

Music resembles language in that it is a temporal sequence of articulated sounds which are more than just sounds. They say something, often something human. The better the music, the more forcefully they say it. The succession of sounds is like logic: it can be right or wrong. But what has been said cannot be detached from the music. Music creates no semiotic system.¹⁸

Even with the breakdown of tonality and other major musical developments at the time, music did not cease to be considered a language for communication – lacking in words but speaking through tones. The notion that music consists of sounds that are more than mere sounds is significant, because music often communicates something profound that is intrinsic and unique to the art itself – with music as a voice, a specific affect is created that cannot be duplicated by another art in quite the same manner.

Music as a language often contains an appealing, emotional element.

Lippman further elaborates with music being a *language of feelings* in saying that:

Written language is analogous to written music. And just as speech is chiefly a vehicle of propositional thought, so the sound of music primarily conveys feeling. Also, the ideas presented by language are coloured by the sensible material in which they are realized; they may even be inconceivable without it; and this is equally true of musical emotions. Yet music can hardly be about our emotional life in general, for then why should it happen to be tonal? Why tone if we are not dealing with a specifically tonal experience? But then why is logical thought expressed in words when it is not inherently verbal? The role of words in reasoning is apparently comparable with the role of music in feeling; it is certainly incorrect that we cannot think or feel in other terms than these, and the only matter that calls for explanation is the eminent suitability of language and music to their tasks.¹⁹

18. Ibid., 165.

19. Ibid., 17.

The idea that music is a language which conveys emotion – and specifically emotional *meaning* – is something that Meyer wrote extensively upon. He states that music is not a ‘universal language’ but one that is culture-specific:

Music is not a ‘universal language.’ The languages and dialects of music are many. They vary from culture to culture...An American must learn to understand Japanese music just as he must learn to understand the spoken language of Japan. An individual familiar with the tradition of modern European music must practice playing and listening to the music of the Middle Ages just as he must practice reading and speaking the language of Chaucer.²⁰

The point is well-taken, though the often heard notion that music is a “universal language” still bears much weight: to clarify and correct Meyer’s statement, perhaps it can be said that music is indeed a universal language that exerts *universal meaning* but also contains *specific meanings* that are often *culture/context-specific*. One says “universal meaning” in reference to a general mood that often pervades the music and would be easily understood by all beyond culture and context. Meyer does distinguish between *emotion*, which is temporary and evanescent, and *mood*, which is relatively permanent and stable – in that way, it can be said that emotion is generally subjective while mood is more often objective. For example, there are several slow sections in Brahms’ *German Requiem* – the whole of which was played at the scene of 9/11 shortly after the terrorist atrocities – that bring a somber and mournful reflection upon the tragedy that took place there. Even if one does not speak German and understand the text at the beginning of the second movement, “Denn alles Fleisch

20. Leonard B. Meyer, *Emotion and Meaning in Music* (Chicago, U.S.A.: The University of Chicago Press, Ltd., London, 1956), 62.

ist wie Gras und alle Herrlichkeit des Menschen wie des Grases Blumen. Das Gras ist verdorret und die Blume abgefallen,”²¹ it is doubtful that anyone listening to this section would describe it as cheery music that makes one want to jump and dance about. This illustrates an overwhelming sense of music’s universality as a language in its ability to transcend both culture and time.

Music as a language communicates something – what that *something* is, and whether or not it is intentional suggests aspects that are both objective and subjective. Meyer frames one’s understanding of musical meaning by distinguishing between the *absolutists*, those who believe that meaning in music is intra-musical (non-referential), and the *referentialists*, those who believe that meaning in music refers to extra-musical components, ie. concepts, actions, and culture. Meyer also separates the emotional as well as intellectual aspects that influence meaning in music: there are the *formalists*, who believe the meaning of music lies in the perception and understanding of the musical relationships set forth in the work of art and that meaning in music is primarily intellectual, versus the *expressionists*, who argue that these same relationships are in some sense capable of exciting feelings and emotions in the listener. Thus, in combining these categories, Meyer finds a modernist compromise:

absolute formalists: intellectual meaning in music is derived intrinsically from relationships in music

absolute expressionists: expressive emotional meanings arise in response to music’s intrinsic content

21. Johannes Brahms, *German Requiem: In Full Score*, (New York: Dover Publications, Inc., 1987), xiv. The translation is, “For all flesh is as grass, and all the glory of man as the flower of grass. The grass withereth, and the flower thereof falleth away,” from 1 Peter 1:24 as noted on page xv.

referential formalists: intellectual meaning in music is derived from understanding music's referential content

referential expressionist: emotional expression is dependent on an understanding of music's referential content

Essentially, what one believes the music is communicating is dependent upon which frame of mind one uses to approach the music: I find that Meyer's definitions above are helpful in understanding one's interpretation of music's meaning. Because the music in this thesis generally exemplifies emotional, expressive qualities and refers to elements in accompanying poetry, I would deem myself a referential expressionist.

1.2 Poetry as a Language

In the same way that music is a uniquely artistic and expressive language, poetry can be regarded in similar terms. Poetry differs mainly from prose not in its content but in the *manner* in which the story, thoughts and ideas are presented. In poetry, the listener experiences the art in a particular way that is unique to its cause. If prose is the *rational* organization of words, then poetry is the *aesthetic* organization of words. According to the American modernist poet Ezra Pound, there is a vibrancy in poetry that may or may not be present in prose writing: after all, he does state, "I believe that poetry is the more highly energized."²² Furthermore, it is this sense of *energy* that sets poetry apart from prose as an art form:

We might come to believe that the thing that matters in art is a sort of energy, something more or less like electricity or radio-activity, a force transfusing,

22. Ezra Pound, *The Literary Essays of Ezra Pound* (New York: New Directions, 1968), 49.

welding, and unifying. A force rather like water when it spurts up through very bright sand and sets it in swift motion...²³

While prose has no need for emotion, it is not only a *requirement* in poetry but there is also an unmistakable musicality to it. Pound writes, “Prose does not need emotion. It may, but it need not, attempt to portray emotion... Poetry is a centaur. The thinking word-arranging, clarifying faculty must move and leap with the energizing, sentient, musical faculties.”²⁴

In examining poetry, Pound concludes the following:

On closer analysis, I find that I mean something like ‘maximum efficiency of expression’; I mean that the writer has expressed something interesting in such a way that one cannot re-say it more effectively. I also mean something associated with discovery. The artist must have discovered something – either of life itself or of the means of expression.²⁵

From this, it is significant to note two points that great poetry possesses: 1) an important *self-discovery* by the artist/poet has taken place – that poetry reveals something about the artist, her life, and how she portrays the world around her; and 2) there is a “maximum efficiency of expression” in that what was said could not have been said any other way such that one would experience that particular concept any more effectively. Russian poet Khlebnikov concurs when he stated in his work “On Poetry” (c.1920) that a *poem*, “is related to flight: in the shortest time possible its language must cover the greatest distance in images and thoughts.”²⁶

23. Ibid.

24. Ibid., 52.

25. Ibid., 56.

26. Helen Vendler, *The Music of What Happens: Poems, Poets, Critics* (Cambridge, Massachusetts; London, England: Harvard University Press, 1988), 4.

Poetry is a work of art that “had something to say and that there was an *urgency* in saying it...with delight.”²⁷ In the moment of passion, a passing thought and/or image is captured and preserved in its essence for eternity. Poetry is an attempt to frame time; it places a particular moment in a particular context such that one obtains a particular experience. Vendler considers the need for poetry to be “a poet seeking to define his own worth,”²⁸ which is related to Pound’s earlier point on self-discovery in poetry.

Poetry, like all art forms, also serves a therapeutic purpose; for in a heated instant of expression, the tension of the moment is released. This is often called ‘confessional poetry’ and is attributed to American poet Sylvia Plath (1932-63), who was severely depressed and made several suicide attempts after discovering her husband Ted Hugh’s affair. Plath finally succeeded when she managed to lock out her children and placed her head in a gas oven. A cold desolation pervades her writing that she “envied the narcissistically appetitive flowers”²⁹:

The claw
Of the magnolia,
Drunk on its own scents,
Asks nothing of life.³⁰

English Romantic poet John Keats (1795-1821) highlights four functions of poetry:

- 1) *historical thought*: i.e. an epic poetry recording history
- 2) *representative allegory*: symbolic, allegorical, such as in Shakespeare, an incarnation of the passions

27. Ibid.

28. Ibid., 116.

29. Ibid., 283.

30. Ibid.

3) *didactic*: to teach, often in the context of religious morality – civilizing and educating the masses by ‘attuning...the soul to tenderness’

4) *linguistically preservative function*: a form of nostalgia in relinquishing an idyllic past.³¹

The third point of poetry, serving a didactic purpose, is prevalent in many 19th-century Romanticist discussions on the function of art as a yearning for something deeper and beyond the material world: it is most notably a “nostalgia for the presence of God in the universe.”³² In that way, poetry serves as a sort of ‘divine narrative,’ as Vendler writes the following with a quote from a poem by Irish poet Seamus Heaney:

The aesthetic claim made by a poem...is that the passage of life can indeed be tallied in a narrative, and that the physical processes of life exquisitely resemble the mental ones, with a fluid sliding of import between them. Fluid signals pass in these earlier poems between the human and the natural as well; the poet is a diviner, feeling in his responsive blood the spring water “broadcasting/ Through a green hazel its secret stations.”³³

Poetry also serves as an art form that bridges the mental and physical capacities in human understanding which is experienced through the senses. Vendler discusses this point through Heaney’s poetry:

In his lobe and larynx there seemed to lie the greatest natural talent since Keats for creating between words that ‘binding secret’ (as Heaney has called it) which, although it depends in part on sound, depends even more on the intellectual and emotional consent between two words – a consent surprising and, in retrospect, seemingly inevitable, that rises from an arduous cooperation of mind and feeling and ear.³⁴

31. Ibid., 116-117.

32. Ibid., 115

33. Ibid., 150.

34. Ibid., 152.

One is enlightened by this connection as it relates to Meyer, who approaches emotional meaning in art (and music) mainly through psychological and scientific behavioural approaches. Both poetry and music, as art forms, are *languages* which communicate something substantial in the physical, emotional, psychological and metaphysical sense.

The premise for Vendler's text on the aesthetic critique of poetry stems from Heaney's poem, *Song*:

There are the mud-flowers of dialect
And the immortelles of perfect pitch
And that moment when the bird sings very close
To the music of what happens.³⁵

Vendler suggests that an aesthetic critique should not merely describe the poetry but more so the *musicality* – the sense of rhythm and movement – in the poetry that renders it of value. In her book, Vendler surveys a variety of poets, and this point is reinforced in her commentary on poems by American 20th-century poet A. R.

Ammons:

If there was, for Ammons, a music of home, it lay in this sort of language, and the truest image of home in Ammons's poetry remains...in the ongoing voice – musical, humorously paced, rhythmic, inexhaustible – that we associate especially with his long poem. These are poems without periods, halted only by the suspensions of colons: they resemble the melting spring water, flowing down into river and sea...³⁶

Thus, the language in poetry, with its inherent sense of *musicality*, makes it oftentimes an ideal source of inspiration for writing music.

35. Ibid., i.

36. Ibid., 314-5.

1.3 Thoughts on Music, Poetry, and Aesthetics by Antoine Fabre D'Olivet

Antoine Fabre D'Olivet (1767 –1825) was a late 18th/early 19th-century obscure French author, poet, philosopher and composer who is generally overlooked due to his largely occultist viewpoints. D'Olivet's best known works today include research on the Hebrew language and the sacred art of music. He is famous for projecting the ideas and values of antiquity into modern terms, attempting to integrate Pythagorean mathematical ideas with the Hebrew Scriptures, Greek philosophy, and the esoteric learning of ancient Egypt and China. D'Olivet suggests that music is rooted in the same principles as the universe itself and thus is intimately connected with the destiny of mankind.

His text, *Music Explained as Science and Art and Considered in its Analogical Relation to Religious Mysteries, Ancient Mythology and the History of the World*, reveals the ideals of D'Olivet, who discusses sacred music in very complex mathematical and scientific terms. Though some of his opinions sound somewhat ludicrous from a contemporary standpoint, he does have some interesting thoughts on melody, as well as the relationship between text and music.

According to D'Olivet, good musicianship is related to one's character:

The good man... is the only excellent musician, because he gives forth a perfect harmony not with a lyre or other instrument but with the whole of his life...[The] perfection of music in its faculty of pleasantly affecting the soul; he assures us, on the contrary, that nothing is further from right reason and truth. The beauty of music consists, according to him, in the very beauty of

the virtue it inspires....[One] can recognize the inclinations of men by the type of music they like or admire...³⁷

D'Olivet credits Plato for noting music's educational and moral-building abilities:

...as Plato expressed... that music should be considered as one of the first elements of education, and that its loss or corruption was the surest sign of the decadence of empires...[Music] acts directly on the soul and puts man in touch with the celestial spirits. Its principal goal is to regulate the passions. It is music that teaches their mutual duties to fathers and children, to princes and subjects, to husbands and wives. The sage finds in its chords an inexhaustible source of instruction and of pleasure, with invariable rules of conduct.³⁸

Music is also important in nation-building, igniting a sense of national pride and order. D'Olivet describes the documented example of ancient Chinese Emperor Shun (2317-2208 B.C.), who had one of the longest rules in China, speaking to an official:

I charge you to preside over music: teach it to the sons of the great, that they may learn to unite justice with mercy, courtesy with gravity, generosity with courage, modesty with contempt for vain amusements. The verses express the sentiments of the soul, the song puts passion into the words, the music modulates the song, harmony unites all the voices and tunes the different instrumental notes to them; the least sensitive hearts are touched, and man is united with the spirit.³⁹

D'Olivet often contrasts the music of the Moderns and Ancients, citing perfection in the latter. He states that music for the Moderns was merely theory and practice, while it was much more significant for the Ancients for its speculative, intellectual and celestial implications.⁴⁰ Furthermore, "intellectual and celestial music... [has] as its

37. Fabre D'Olivet, *Music Explained as Science and Art and Considered in its Analogical Relation to Religious Mysteries, Ancient Mythology and the History of the World* (Rochester, Vermont: Inner Traditions International Ltd., 1987), 43.

38. Ibid., 47.

39. Ibid., 48.

40. Ibid., 55.

object the contemplation of Nature and the knowledge of the immutable laws of the Universe,”⁴¹ which D’Olivet regarded as divine. Of the Ancients, D’Olivet emphasized that music was a gift *from* God to be given *back to* God himself:

Music, therefore, should not be considered as the invention of one man, for there has never been a man on earth capable of inventing a science, and there never will be...It is a gift that the human spirit makes to humanity by means of its inspirational faculties. Any inspired science descends in principle, enveloped in its spiritual germ, uninformed and feeble in its first elements but containing in itself all its developments in potentiality...[Man] possesses the primary inspiration... He dominates the science, but he has neither created nor invented it...[It] is always to the Universal Being, to God himself...that they attribute its creation and invention.⁴²

With regard to music and melody, D’Olivet emphasized the emotional sentiment guiding its creation: “Melody is not merely a succession of tones, but rather, it is the thought and sentiment that has presided over this succession.”⁴³ When an element of intellect is combined with action, music – and other arts including poetry and painting – result from this amalgamation:

Let us say plainly: no melody can exist without a thought, any more than any painting or poem can. Tones, colours, and words are the means that music, painting, or poetry employ to clothe thought in various ways and to give external form to that which previously existed only in the mind. Each of these arts has its appropriate manner of action.⁴⁴

D’Olivet discusses “the particular” in poetry, which seeks to *clarify* a thought in order that it may be grasped. Music, on the other hand, seeks to *beautify* “the general” thought through various elements of affect and motion.

41. Ibid., 56.

42. Ibid., 85-7.

43. Ibid., 137.

44. Ibid.

Poetry, animated by general thought, particularizes it to enable it to be grasped; music, on the contrary, struck by a particular thought, generalizes it to increase its beauty and sphere and contents itself with fixing the effect that the other two arts [i.e. poetry and painting] often leave uncertain and fugitive, neither of them being able to dispense with movement.⁴⁵

In this way, I find the use of poetry to inspire music an excellent means of artistic expression. The use of poetry to direct the music uniquely allows for concepts and images to be expressed in both a concrete and abstract manner simultaneously:

Thus poetry and music lend each other to mutual aid and embellishment; for poetry determines that which in music is too vague, while music expands that which in poetry is too restrained. Thus one can imagine them both as two ministers of thought, of which [poetry], carrying ideas from heaven to earth, particularizes what is universal, while [music], lifting them up from earth to heaven, universalizes what is particular.⁴⁶

Poetry relies on text as its method of expression: words have concrete associations and provide definitive meanings. Meanwhile, music uses notes and tones to express an abstract concept or thought. Poetry is 'restrained' by the specific chosen text and placement of words, whereas music animates a general mood and is thus termed 'vague.'

If the union of poetry and music is a highly beneficial one, then the absence of poetry in music, says D'Olivet, renders music lacking:

It is also true to say that music separated from poetry and become purely instrumental is far from enjoying all its advantages: it is a kind of soul deprived of a body that falls into vaguenesses and lacks the means to make its beauties felt.⁴⁷

45. Ibid., 137-8.

46. Ibid., 138.

47. Ibid., 147.

Many would certainly disagree: does it imply that *absolute music*, that is, music unaccompanied by a programmatic title or text, is lacking in any way? Surely, there is beauty and validity in Bach's many preludes and fugues even without a programmatic title. While one cannot justly say that absolute music "lacks the means to make its beauties felt" (see quote above), having visual and textual stimuli for the mind to contemplate along with the aural aspect would only serve to *enrich and enhance* the already glorious experience of music.

1.4 Thoughts on Music, Poetry, and Aesthetics by Eduard Hanslick

Eduard Hanslick (1825-1904) was a Bohemian-Austrian writer on music, known particularly for his text *The Beautiful in Music*, or *Vom Musikalisch-Schönen* in German. Originally published in 1854 and revised nearly 40 years later, *Vom Musikalisch-Schönen* is his most influential work and remains a key text in musical aesthetics today. His main point, repeated frequently with minor variation, is that the *beauty* in music is in the *music itself*. It is not merely to be enjoyed by the senses but contemplated in the intellect. Thus, Hanslick was a strict formalist and emphasized the union of form and subject in music as its underlying beauty as a fine art.

In response to the fundamental questions of "what is music?" and more precisely, "what is the *subject* of music?" Hanslick answers, "Music consists of

successions and forms of sound, and these alone constitute the subject.”⁴⁸ In music, the form and subject are fused together while they remain separate entities in poetry:

Now in music, substance and form, the subject and its working out, the image and the realized conception are mysteriously blended in one decomposable whole. This complete fusion of substance and form is exclusively characteristic of music, and presents a sharp contrast to poetry...inasmuch as these arts are capable of representing the same idea and the same event in different forms.⁴⁹

In essence, if the form and subject are fused together as they are found in music, then without form and structure, music would cease to exist. Poetry, on the other hand, has a distinctly separate form and subject: for example, one can write a poem about blue skies (subject) as a sestina (form) and also another poem of blue skies (subject) as a sonnet (form). Because the subject of music is the music itself in its entirety, it cannot be translated precisely into another form as its subject already *is* its form.

According to Hanslick, the old philosophy of aesthetics held that beauty was “the offspring of sensations”⁵⁰ without much regard to the intellect, and thus offers little enlightenment into the possibility of its objectivity:

Such systems of aesthetics are not only unphilosophical, but they assume an almost sentimental character when applied to the most ethereal of all arts, and though no doubt pleasing to a certain class of enthusiasts, they afford but little enlightenment to a thoughtful student...A satisfactory result, however, is only to be attained by relinquishing a method which starts from subjective sensation, only to bring us face to face with it once more, after taking us for a poetic ramble over the surface of the subject. Any such investigation will prove utterly futile, unless the method obtaining in natural science be followed at least in the sense of dealing with the things themselves, in order to

48. Eduard Hanslick, *The Beautiful In Music: A Contribution To The Revisal Of Musical Aesthetics* (London: Novello and Company, Limited, 1891), 162.

49. *Ibid.*, 166-7.

50. *Ibid.*, 15.

determine what is permanent and objective in them, when dissociated from the ever-varying impressions which they produce.⁵¹

To make sense of beauty, art must be contemplated in the *intellect* in order to locate any sense of objectivity. Hanslick quotes this point through Austrian dramatist poet Grillparzer, who notes this particular difference in the effects of poetry compared to music. Grillparzer suggests that music affects the senses first and then the intellect, whereas poetry appeals to the intellect before exciting the senses:

The essential difference between music and poetry might be brought into strong relief by showing that music primarily affects the senses and, after rousing the motions, reaches the intellect last of all. Poetry, on the other hand, first raises up an idea which in its turn excites the emotions, while it affects the senses only as an extreme result of its highest or lowest form. They, therefore, pursue an exactly opposite course, for one spiritualizes the material, whereas the other materializes the spiritual.⁵²

Furthermore, poetry and music differ in this manner because poetry is an art form that produces *concrete* imagery in its textual form, whereas music is an art form that produces *abstract* ones in a tonal form:

The primary aim of Poetry, Sculpture and Painting...is... to produce some concrete image. Only by way of inference can the picture of a flowergirl call up the wider notion of maidenly content and modesty; the picture of a snow-covered churchyard the transitoriness of earthly existence. In like manner, but far more vaguely and capriciously, may the listener discover in a piece of music the idea of youthful contentedness or that of transitoriness. These abstract notions, however, are by no means the subject-matter of the pictures or the musical compositions, and it is still more absurd to talk as if the feelings... or 'youthful contentedness' could be represented by them.⁵³

51. Ibid., 15-16.

52. Ibid., 17.

53. Ibid., 36-7.

The subject of feeling and emotion in music (already examined in Meyer's writing) is also discussed by Hanslick, who distinguishes between *sensation* and *feeling*. *Sensation* is 'the act of perceiving a sensible quality, such as a sound or colour'⁵⁴ whereas *feeling* is the consciousness of a psychical activity i.e. a state of satisfaction, sorrow, discomfort, etc.⁵⁵ In other words, we *perceive* the world – the art – around us through our senses, and emotions then become our method of responding to the stimuli as perceived through the senses. Hanslick goes on to elaborate that the specific representation of feelings is not the subject of music: for while music is capable of expression, it cannot communicate definitive emotion because specific interpretation and character of meaning is always subjective:

The *whispering* may be expressed, true; but not the whispering of 'love'; the *clamour* may be reproduced, undoubtedly; but not the clamour of 'ardent combatants.' Music may reproduce phenomena such as whispering, storming, roaring, but the feelings of love or anger have only a subjective existence.⁵⁶

The "feeling" evident in music is, in fact, the *abstract representation* of emotion: instead, what one senses is a general mood that is conveyed through the dynamic motion and intensities in music. Hanslick asks, "What part of feelings can music represent, if not the subject involved in them?"⁵⁷ then answers his own question:

Only their *dynamic* properties. It may reproduce the motion accompanying psychical action, according to its momentum: speed, slowness, strength, weakness, increasing and decreasing intensity. But motion is only one of the concomitants of feeling, not the feeling itself. It is a popular fallacy to suppose that the descriptive power of music is sufficiently qualified by saying

54. Ibid., 19.

55. Ibid.

56. Ibid., 33.

57. Ibid., 37.

that, although incapable of representing *subject* in feeling, it may not represent the feeling itself.⁵⁸

Hanslick asserts that music, through imitation, can show a representation of feeling though not the feeling itself:

Music can undertake to imitate objective phenomena only, and never the specific feeling they arouse. The falling of snow, the fluttering of birds, and the rising of the sun can be painted musically only, by producing auditory impressions which are dynamically related to those phenomena.⁵⁹

That being said, feeling *by itself* is inadequate as the sole driving force of music but without it, musical creation would not be made possible as emotion is an important factor in the composition process:

Nothing great or beautiful has ever been accomplished without warmth of feeling. The emotional faculty is, no doubt, highly developed in the composer, no less than in the poet; but with the former it is not the productive factor. A strong and definite pathos may fill his soul and be the consecrating impulse to work, but it can never become the subject-matter, as is obvious from the very nature of music which has neither the power nor the vocation to represent *definite* feelings.⁶⁰

If emotional sensation is not the *beautiful* in music, what precisely is it?

Hanslick would say that it is the *subject* of music, and the subject itself is *intrinsically musical*, which is its point about beauty:

We cannot acquaint anybody with the 'subject' of a theme, except by playing it. The subject of a composition can, therefore, not be understood as an object derived from an external source, but as something intrinsically musical; in other words, as the concrete group of sounds in a piece of music.⁶¹

58. Ibid.

59. Ibid., 53.

60. Ibid., 101-2.

61. Ibid., 169.

Music has a subject, and it is the *music itself*. Words may seem insufficient to illustrate this point as it encompasses the *beautiful* beyond human explanation:

Music has a subject –*i.e.*, a musical subject, which is no less a vital spark of the divine fire than the beautiful of any other art. Yet, only by steadfastly denying the existence of ‘subject’ in music, is it possible to save its ‘true subject.’ The indefinite emotions which at best underlie the other kind of subject, do not explain its spiritual force.⁶²

Thus, beauty in music is very much tied to its intrinsic essence, and its value is conceived from the intricate combination of elements in rhythm, euphony, melody, harmony, sound and motion.⁶³ To reiterate Hanslick’s earlier point on aesthetics, one conceives of it in the mind – the *imagination*, in fact – after the senses are stimulated and it is then the aesthetic phenomenon of *beauty* in art is realized:

But our *imagination*, which is so constituted as to be affected by auditory impressions...delights in the sounding forms and musical structures, and conscious of their sensuous nature, lives in the immediate and free contemplation of the beauty.⁶⁴

Hanslick suggests that music seeks to be *beautiful* and that *beauty* is a quality that is independent of the observer:

The beautiful, strictly speaking, aims at nothing, since it is nothing but a form which, though available for many purposes according to its nature has, as such, no aim beyond itself. If the contemplation of something beautiful arouses pleasurable feelings, this effect is distinct from the beautiful as such. I may, indeed, place a beautiful object before the observer, with the avowed purpose of giving him pleasure, but this purpose in no way affects the beauty of the object. The beautiful is and remains beautiful though it arouse no emotion whatever, and although the beautiful exists for the gratification of an observer, it is independent of him.⁶⁵

62. Ibid., 174.

63. Ibid., 67.

64. Ibid., 69.

65. Ibid., 18-19.

And it is precisely this *musical beauty* that is the *power* – even more so than emotion – that drives the composer to express herself, for Hanslick writes, “Musical beauty alone is the true power which the composer wields. With this for his pilot, he safely passes through the rapids of time, where the factor of emotion would be powerless to save him from shipwreck.”⁶⁶

1.5 Thoughts on Music, Poetry, and Aesthetics by George Lansing Raymond

George Lansing Raymond (1839 – 1929) was a prominent professor of Aesthetic Criticism, who taught at various academic institutions including Princeton University, George Washington University (D.C.) and Williams College. He was an art theorist who presents a progressive approach to the arts, which originates in nature and the mind and results in physical manifestations of musical characteristics:

The phenomena of the arts of the highest class have been traced [in this book] to their sources in material nature and in the human mind; the different arts have been shown to be developed by exactly similar methods; and these methods have been shown to characterize the entire work of artistic imagination, from the formulation of psychical concepts to that of their most physical expressions in rhythm, proportion and harmony.⁶⁷

He places emphasis on nature in art and was unique amongst art theorists to incorporate psychology, physiology and biology into his art theory. Though largely neglected today, *The New York Times* comments on Raymond’s work, “In a spirit at

66. Ibid., 122.

67. George Lansing Raymond, *Essentials of Esthetics*, (New York: G.P. Putnam, 1906 rev. 1921).

once scientific and that of the true artist, he pierces through the manifestations of art to their sources, and shows the relations, intimate and essential, between painting, sculpture, poetry, music, and architecture.”⁶⁸

Raymond’s text *Rhythm and Harmony in Poetry and Music Together with Music as a Representative Art* is examined for this paper, for it contains much relevant insight on the topic of music, poetry and aesthetics. Raymond does an excellent job in defining key terms. He states that *art* is “nature made human, or nature remade by the human mind.”⁶⁹ Of *beauty*, Raymond says:

Beauty is a characteristic of any complex form of various elements producing apprehensible unity (i.e. harmony or likeness) of effects upon the motive organs of sensation in the *ear or eye*, or upon the emotive sources of the imagination *in the mind*; or *upon the one and the other*.⁷⁰

Like Hanslick, Raymond believed that beauty was not merely received by the senses, but had an effect on the mind. He elaborates more on the topic:

The highest beauty, in all its different phases, results, as in the case in other departments of excellence, from harmony in effects. Analyzing the elements of these effects, carries with it the additional conclusion that, so far as beauty is physical, it results when sounds, shapes, or colours harmonize together in such ways that their combinations harmonize with the natural requirements of the physical senses – the ears or eyes to which they appeal; that, so far as beauty is psychical, it results when the thoughts and feelings suggested or expressed through forms harmonized together, and also with the natural requirements of the minds that they address; and that, so far as it is both physical and psychical, it results when all the elements entering into both physical and psychical effects harmonize together, and also with the combined requirements of both natures in the man subjected to their influence. In the latter sense, it will be observed that complete beauty necessitates something more than that which is either formal or expressional. It can be obtained in

68. “Identity in Art of all Kinds; The Genesis of Art Form,” *New York Times*, (March 19, 1893, pg 19).

69. George Raymond, *Rhythm and Harmony in Poetry and Music Together with Music as a Representative Art* (New York: The Knickerbocker Press, 1909), vi.

70. *Ibid.*, viii.

the degree only in which a form beautiful in itself fits a beautiful ideal conjured in the mind by the imagination as a result of a harmonious combination of thoughts and feelings.⁷¹

Raymond's definition of *beauty* appears very confusing at first, but essentially, it has to do with an *idealized form* in the intellect and having that perfection materialized in the art/music before us – this Raymond calls “the harmony or likeness of effects” (see quote above). Beauty is not merely a physical manifestation of the ideal, but as “far as beauty is psychical, it results when the thoughts and feelings suggested or expressed through forms [are] harmonized together, and also with the natural requirements of the minds that they address” (see above quote). In other words, one finds a deeper emotional, spiritual, and psychological connection with that object/work of beauty such that there is a “harmonious combination of thoughts and feelings.” By comparison, Hanslick suggested art – specifically music – had to be contemplated in the senses *and* the mind in order for beauty to be realized; Raymond pushes this definition further by adding that there is a delightful *harmony* in doing so when consensus arises within the intellectual, emotional, sensual and metaphysical realms of understanding.

There are many similarities in poetry and music as art forms that Raymond explains quite thoroughly in his text. Both poetry and music are languages: poetry uses words while music consists of notes to symbolize tones. In addition to the use of words/notes, both poetry and music contain phrases; syllables; start and stop points; pauses; accents; stresses and subordinate sound; as well as the appropriate

71. Ibid., vii-viii.

punctuation to indicate these items as needed. Both poetry and music appeal to the senses, and firstly to the ear: both involve the use of sound separated by space and time – unlike the other art forms of drawing or painting, there is a sense of *motion*.

There are at least seven other similarities in poetry and music as inferred through Raymond's text.

- i) The presence of *accents* in music and poetry make it *rhythmical*. Both music and poetry make use of accents which indicate an emphasized force in sound for contrast with unaccented notes/words:

One feature now remains unconsidered to which early attempts to render speech rhythmical can give what has been termed *principality*. This feature is *accent*. But notice that accent thus used has a tendency to form the larger rhythmic groups, such as are developed into poetic lines, before it forms the smaller ones, such as are developed into measures.⁷²

The presence of accented and unaccented syllables creates a distinction from one another: certain tones/words are given *principality* while others fall into *subordination*. The variety allows for the limitless creativity evident in both art forms as accented and non-accented notes/tones engage in a delightful interplay:

...it is necessary to give *principality* to the accented syllable, and through it to the element of like intervals of time, and to give *subordination* to the intervening unaccented syllables. When this is done, moreover, notice that it is necessarily done in such a way that the accented and unaccented syllables seem to *balance* each other.⁷³

72. Ibid., 19.

73. Ibid., 20.

Thus, *accents* give rise to *rhythm*, which is a pattern of regular and irregular pulses, and this is evident in both poetry and music:

Rhythm is produced by accenting – sometimes through duration alone, sometimes through force alone, but usually through both in combination – certain tones separated from one another by exactly the same intervals of time. In music these accented tones, as a rule, begin measures. They are the tones immediately following the perpendicular lines termed bars... In poetry, the accents are sometimes at the ends, and sometimes in the middle of measures.⁷⁴

- ii) As a result of rhythm demarcated by accents, music and poetry fall into natural *measures*:

Poetic measures... result, primarily, from force given to syllables at regular intervals of duration. But careful observation will reveal that, as a rule, the application of this force necessarily involves also an increase in the duration of the accented syllable. This increase is made in speech unconsciously; in music it is made consciously; and this was the case in the classic metres, furnishing one proof, which is confirmed by others, that they were results of an effort to intone verses – i.e. to make music of them.⁷⁵

- iii) Both poetry and music have start and stop points; they begin and end in a flow of phrases. At the end of a section is a *cadence* to indicate a sense of finality and rest. Consequently, both poetry and music contain moments of pause and rest – *a space to breathe* – to separate the tones/words used:

Just as in poetry too, the lines are caused primarily by the groupings of sounds into music. In singing there will always be a tendency to pause just as in reading; and in singing verses, a tendency to pause in the same places as reading them.⁷⁶

74. Ibid., 257.

75. Ibid., 21.

76. Ibid., 94.

- iv) Both music and poetry may use *motives*, which are distinctly recognizable and reoccurring themes or phrases used to symbolize a main concept, idea or characteristic:

When the tone of an expression is transferred to music, as it often can be, it does not lose its meaning, and there is a sense in which to develop it musically is to develop its meaning musically. It is the motive, therefore, primarily, which renders it possible for musical form, even when at the greatest distance, apparently from the region of definite ideas, to represent movements of thought or of mental feeling.⁷⁷

- v) At times it is easily detected, and at other times it may seem unconscious, but there is often an apparent *harmony* underlying the poetry and music that adds to its beauty as an art. If one considers *harmony* as part of a “unity of effect” (see above quote on *beauty*), then in poetry, it is the use of rhyme, alliteration and similar assonance in sounds that our ears naturally group together: this concept of *harmony* is also echoed in music in full and broken chordal structures:

These connections between characteristics of harmony as produced in music and in poetry are mainly interesting as showing – what will be brought out more clearly hereafter – how analogously the mind works when securing, though unconscious of its method, either musical or poetic unity of effect. No one can fail to detect in both arts the operation of the same general principle.⁷⁸

- vi) There is the undeniable presence of *tone* and *pitch* in music and poetry:

77. Ibid., 97.

78. Ibid., 145.

For however dull the experienced ear may be in recognizing the elements of melody and harmony... none can fail to perceive in the emphatic elocutionary rising and falling of the voice, that which resembles a melody, nor in the long inflection of a single syllable... that which suggests at least the blending of tones in harmony.⁷⁹

Pitch is relevant as it relates to harmony, as harmony in music consists of a consonant variety of pitches: poetry is thus limited since the average human voice has a range of about two octaves⁸⁰ while instrumental music may stretch across seven octaves such as on the piano. Music, therefore, covers a wider range of pitch where poetry and human tones may fall short: in that way, it can be said that music is *an extension* of the poetry in its expressive capabilities.

- vii) Poetry and music are similar arts in their ability to become general expressions of emotions. One is careful to say *general* and not *specific* emotion in light of Meyer's comments on music lacking the ability to communicate a specific feeling. Beyond spoken language and ordinary prose, both poetry and music are *expressive* extensions of man's invisible, unconscious thoughts:

The higher arts... are all developed from forms in which a man expresses thought or mental feeling, which forms, because thought and feelings are inaudible and invisible, are always adaptations by him, for representative purposes, of sights of sounds furnished by the physical phenomena of external nature, including the physical

79. Ibid., 171-2.

80. Ibid., 175.

utterances or movements, which are natural to the human beings about him as possessors of bodies as well as of minds.⁸¹

Raymond considers poetry as a “talk back”, i.e. man’s response to his inherent nature and circumstances:

Poetry, being developed from the unsustained and responsive methods of expression underlying language, manifests a constant tendency to talk back and, therefore, to mention and describe what has interrupted the flow of thought and presented new thought.⁸²

If that is true, then one may consider music as a “sing back”, i.e. man’s response to man’s nature and the *beauty* which has *captivated* him as the artist. In that way, music is the natural tendency to *sing back* that which has captivated the artist.

1.6 Further Thoughts on Music, Poetry, and Aesthetics (Hamilton)

Andy Hamilton is a professor of philosophy, history and aesthetics of jazz at Durham University, UK. He writes for contemporary music magazine *The Wire* and is a jazz pianist. His text *Music and Aesthetics* surveys late 18th/early 19th-century philosophers on the topic of music and aesthetics and presents some interesting viewpoints to be mentioned in this paper.

In his text, Hamilton highlights an influential thinker in the late Enlightenment era, philosopher Immanuel Kant (1724-1804), who regarded music as leisure – a mere

81. Ibid., 231.

82. Ibid., 234.

“beautiful play of sensations”⁸³ – rather than an art form. Kant described music more “as a matter of enjoyment than of culture... [because it did not] fulfill for him what [was] the hallmark of the aesthetic experience, [i.e.] the freeplay of imagination with understanding, since it is inferior to the judgment of reason.”⁸⁴ Kant places much emphasis and power on the human reasoning faculties, which is precisely what Hanslick and Raymond later emphasize in their works; however, Kant simply didn’t regard most music as qualifying for that superior category.

Kant also speaks of the ideal characteristic of ‘free beauty’, i.e. the autonomous aesthetic judgment of beauty, versus a ‘dependent beauty’, which makes reference to its original concept or function.⁸⁵ The precise application of these concepts can become slightly problematic. Piano music from poetry might be considered as only having ‘dependent beauty’ as one might rely on the text to elicit concepts and imagery in the mind; meanwhile, the music could stand well on its own without the text and simply rely on its own ‘free beauty’ – though Kant might even say that as an absolute, instrumental piece, it is lacking in either because he may find an absence of meaning or intellectual appeal in the music. One thing to be agreed upon was that for strict formalists like Kant, it was best to disregard subjective charms and emotional appeal in art with the belief that form itself was the best measure of aesthetic value.⁸⁶

83. Andy Hamilton, *Aesthetics and Music* (Continuum International Publishing Group, 2007), 70.

84. *Ibid.*, 70-71.

85. *Ibid.*, 71.

86. *Ibid.*

In Kant's text *Critique of Judgment*, he suggests that an art form that is *beautiful* exerts the quality of "disinterested pleasure"⁸⁷: in other words, it generates a state of delight without explicitly trying to do so. Furthermore, there is a *universal validity* to this aesthetic judgment: everyone does or *ought to* agree that the object in question is indeed *beautiful*. In the realm of aesthetics, music has "purposiveness without a purpose"⁸⁸: essentially, Kant meant that music served an intentional purpose in being aesthetically pleasing without a particular, definitive purpose. This is an important point in placing *beauty* in context to the goals of the artist, for the principal aim of art is that it serves no explicit practical function. This ties in nicely with Keats' fourth function of poetry, namely when he states that poetry has a linguistically preservative function which was a form of nostalgia in relinquishing an idyllic era (see page 10), where a lament over the past serves no practical use in the present. In this way, both poetry and music do not function to be *functional*, but to be *beautiful*. This is precisely the sort of *beauty* in music that Ing strives for in her series of piano music from poetry: it's *freely beautiful* for its own sake without explicitly saying so.

Hamilton also discusses the thoughts of German idealist philosopher Georg W. F. Hegel (1770-1831), who would have agreed with Kant on notions that aesthetic judgment is disinterested (i.e. devoid of practical interest), and that *beauty* is the object of a universal and necessary delight. However, Hegel "argued emphatically

87. Hannah Ginsborg, "What is a Judgment of Beauty?", *Kant's Aesthetics and Teleology*, Stanford Encyclopedia of Philosophy, (first published July 2, 2005), <http://plato.stanford.edu/entries/kant-aesthetics/#2.2>.

88. Hamilton, *Aesthetics and Music*, 72.

that art's primary role is the *disclosure of truth*. He believes that art and religion are ways of discovering ourselves and the world, not merely ways of beautifying and sanctifying what has already been discovered.”⁸⁹ In other words, the principal aim of art was not mere leisure nor to give pleasure, but to enhance human understanding. Hegel emphasized that truth must be felt and loved through religion, as well as experienced and expressed through art: “for in inwardness as such, in pure thought, in the world of laws and their universality man cannot endure; he also needs sensuous existence, feeling, the heart, and emotion.”⁹⁰ In this way, he does echo sentiments in Keats' third function of poetry – that is, the moral and didactic function of art (see page 11-12). But surely art is capable and meant to accomplish both – it can be used both to disclose the divine *truth* as well as serve to *beautify*. It would be unfair to say that one purpose is ‘higher’ than another; rather, each has their own time and place by retaining different principal appeals (eg. music in a concert hall versus music in a church). In the same way, music from poetry is in no way greater or lesser than absolute music: it is but one method of composing to express an inner beauty.

Through Hegel, Hamilton also highlights a metaphysical and inward, self-reflective quality in art that is crucial to his art theory. Hamilton notes that:

The Symbolic arts are represented by architecture, the Classical arts by sculpture. The Romantic arts – painting, music and poetry – are the summit of the artistic achievement in their expression of the ‘inwardness of self-consciousness’, whose content is ‘not tied to sensuous presentation.’⁹¹

89. Ibid., 73.

90. Ibid.

91. Ibid., 74.

Like Meyer, Hanslick and Raymond, who emphasized that value in music did not result merely from its sensual appeal but one that involved the intellect, Hegel suggests that the *substance* of art stems from one's 'inner self-consciousness' and echoes Schopenhauer's thoughts that music reflects the *will's objectivity*. Hamilton interprets Hegel as suggesting that "music is the art of the soul, directly addressed to the soul because it shares the property of self-negation through time – musical sound is perpetually dying away and vanishing."⁹² In that way, music is unique as an art form as "it mediates the abstract spirituality of poetry,"⁹³ writes Hamilton, who also suggests that Hegel considered music's element to consist of "the inner life as such, explicitly shapeless feeling... Music's content is constituted by the spiritual subjectivity in its immediate subjective inherent unity, the human heart, feeling as such."⁹⁴ When one thinks of piano music from poetry, there appears a quality of self-contemplation in both – its "spiritual subjectivity" one might say. In essence, it is the soul of one art speaking in abstract conversation with the soul of the other. One does not hear precisely *what* they have said; only that it *is* being said in a *beautiful* manner.

The two 'styles' of *beautiful* are worth noting, and that is made explicit in Friedrich Nietzsche's (1844 –1900) influential work, *The Birth of Tragedy*. Nietzsche explains music-drama as the rebirth of tragedy resulting from the art of fruitful dialogue between the *Classic*, self-controlled, "Apollonian" impulse and *Romantic*, ecstatic, "Dionysian" impulse. Raymond briefly expands these terms in

92. Ibid., 75.

93. Ibid.

94. Ibid.

suggesting they had to do with tempers of the mind: “classicism is reasonable, logical, and constructive, while romanticism is emotional and sensuous”⁹⁵ – in other words, there is an intellectual-versus-emotional dichotomy at play here. They are opposing and different, but equal in worth, as the Apollonian and Dionysian impulses are in constant battle with one another to create the aesthetic phenomenon that becomes what one comes to know as *art*.

Nietzsche does speak of music and poetry explicitly in his text *Human, All Too Human*, in which he states:

Music is, of and in itself, not so significant for our inner world, not so profoundly exciting, that it can be said to count as the immediate language of feeling; but its primeval union with poetry has deposited so much symbolism into rhythmic sounds, that now we suppose it to speak directly to the inner world and to come from the inner world.⁹⁶

Nietzsche’s comments contrast sharply to D’Olivet’s, who suggested music was from the divine and for the divine. Nietzsche, on the other hand, hints that music originates from ‘our inner world’ in order to ‘speak directly to the inner world’: it is as if the soul is having a conversation with itself in one’s most inner depths of being. While Hanslick, who maintained that music expressed only *dynamic* aspects of feelings (through a notion of its existence and general representation), and Nietzsche would both agree that music lacks the capacity for definitive meaning and emotion, Hamilton says that Hanslick would uphold this as the essence of music’s beauty, whereas Nietzsche would find poetry an invaluable resource to supplement the

95. Raymond, *Rhythm and Harmony in Poetry and Music*, xiii.

96. Hamilton, *Aesthetics and Music*, 80.

deficiency.⁹⁷ For the one who composes music inspired by poetry, that is a most agreeable point: music presented alongside its poetic muse only stands to have the latter art enrich the experience of the former.

Moving into a modernist 20th-century era, the changing sounds of music had a direct impact on music and art philosophy. Hamilton highlights the work of German-born philosopher and social critic Theodor L. W. Adorno (1903 –1969), who is noted for writing about art's newfound sense of *autonomy* in a modernist era as reflective of influences including World War II; industrialization; the fragmentation of society; and global, cultural developments. Essentially, art was undergoing a revolution of sorts in an increased capacity for self-interrogation: the uprise of the 'ugly' became the inescapable result as music experimented freely with its tonal possibilities. It is as if "ugly" had become the new "beautiful."

Consider the new sound possibilities and harmonic motions heard in the works of Debussy, Mahler, Strauss, Bartok, Stravinsky, and Schoenberg: art was desperately appealing for a "new musical language" that had never existed prior. Citing Schoenberg's *Composition with 12 Tones* as an example, Adorno discusses a newfound 'emancipated dissonance', resulting in a new kind of sound in reference to "its comprehensibility, which is considered equivalent to the consonance's comprehensibility. A style is based on this premise that dissonances are consonances and renounces a tonal center."⁹⁸ Essentially, Adorno is suggesting that art need not be afraid to challenge formerly accepted, social norms -- such as traditional tonality --

97. Ibid., 81.

98. Ibid., 156.

and thus, it must retain its autonomy in doing so. For Adorno, musical compositions which pushed the ‘evolution of tonality’ were therefore inevitable at this point:

When I maintain that atonality is the only possible manner of composing today, it is not because I consider it ahistorically to be ‘better’, a handier referential system than tonality. It is rather because I think that tonality has collapsed, that every tonal chord has a meaning that we can no longer grasp.⁹⁹

Adorno radicalizes Kant’s aesthetic theory of art’s “purposiveness without purpose” in his agreement that great art is generally functionless: Adorno does state, “insofar as a social function may be predicated of works of art, it is the function of having no function.”¹⁰⁰ The irony, however, is autonomous art has its ‘purpose’ in creating something without direct function: in other words, art creates a social *situation* that lacks a direct social *function*.¹⁰¹ Thus, the virtue of autonomous art is not in its content but its form as a social critique:

Art... is social not only because of its mode of production...nor simply because of the social derivation of its thematic material. Much more importantly, art becomes social by its opposition to society, and it occupies this position as autonomous art. By crystallizing in itself as something unique to itself, rather than complying with existing social norms and qualifying as ‘socially useful’, it criticizes society by merely existing... through its refusal of society, which is equivalent to sublimation through the law of form, autonomous art makes itself a vehicle of ideology.¹⁰²

My piano music from poetry doesn’t particularly *challenge* any social norms; in fact, it leans largely towards preserving classic, Romantic ideals of simply being beautiful for its own sake. However, it is worth noting that classical contemporary

99. Ibid., 164.

100. Ibid., 161.

101. Ibid.

102. Ibid., 169.

music as such *is challenged* in finding a receptive public who is genuinely enthused by this type of art. It is not popular music, it is not well-known, nor is it often heard on the radio with a catchy melody. Classical contemporary music may or may not challenge traditional tonality, but more notably, it is challenged to compete for one's attention in a world teeming with a wide variety of music and entertainment – much of which is created to sell and generate a profit. Piano music from poetry, particularly of the classical contemporary sort, does not sell or generally garner widespread appeal: it only *speaks* to anyone who is *willing* to listen.

1.7 Symbolism, Motion & Tonal Idealism in Music and Poetry (Lippman)

Edward A. Lippman is a professor emeritus of music at Columbia University whose text *The Philosophy and Aesthetics of Music* is examined in this paper. He discusses many ideas that relate poetry and music, included among them are: 1) symbolism as well as emotional content in music and poetry and its significance; 2) progressive temporality in music and poetry (an emphasis on how motion applies to both); and 3) characteristics of tonal idealism in Romanticist music and poetry.

In both music and poetry, an element of emotional engagement is oftentimes a natural and inevitable response to the experience:

Musical experience is emotional, and thus music is to some extent comparable to situations that produce emotion. There may be an aesthetic response to music that is characterized by contemplation and noninvolvement, but we also can remain detached and unmoved by events in life apart from music. The possibility of becoming merely a spectator is no argument against the relevance of emotion and feeling in either case.¹⁰³

103. Lippman, *Philosophy and Aesthetics of Music*, 12.

However, it is not quite the same sort of specific emotion as those attained through life experiences or events; rather, aesthetic musical experiences exist in their own realm:

Musical feelings have their own character: they are not the feelings we know and roughly name in our experience outside of music, and they do not lead in themselves to ideas or concepts of other feelings. Thus music may be an emotional experience and still not represent emotional contexts belonging to other areas of life.¹⁰⁴

Furthermore, these “musical feelings” are molded and patterned by musical structures which can be seen as symbolic of other concepts:

Not only melodic patterns but chords, or instruments, or also whole passage or works arouse feelings and moods adaptable to symbolic purposes. Every chord, even every interval, has its own emotional character, strongly dependent...on context.¹⁰⁵

Symbolism in music is not limited to emotions, for they may also be representative of real physical objects perhaps as dictated by the poetry or accompanying program. Real objects may be symbolized by recreating a similar sound or the sort of atmosphere or situation one might usually find the object in:

Symbolism based on emotive response is applicable not only to representing emotions but also to representing physical objects and happenings. Even when our attention goes to emotion itself, we are usually often embedded in some actual situation. But it may be our declared intention to represent the physical world, and we may then choose to do so indirectly by seeking to duplicate the emotions it arouses. This is the route of what is often called poetic or subjective program music. Physical entities can be symbolized by

104. Ibid., 18.

105. Ibid., 14.

imitating the sounds they produce, by copying them structurally, or by creating a heterosensory equivalent.¹⁰⁶

Through pitch, timbre and volume intensity, musical tone may be used to symbolize a concept, or a dichotomy of concepts such as heaven/hell, sky/earth, etc.:

Intersensory relations are responsible for what is probably the most persistent symbol in music: the representation of high and low and of the up and down through pitch. High and low pitch can represent not only physical position and visually perceptible ascent and descent but also abstract conceptions which are somehow associated with physical high and low, such as ...hell and death. In whatever period of Western music we look, we find this same spatial symbolism. It is used for the Resurrection, for the fall of man, for the stars and the heavens and lightning, and for the depths of the sea.¹⁰⁷

Thus, there are infinite possibilities of symbolic representation in music – some of which are *internal* and have to do with form, while others are *external* and have to do with accompanying referential material. Lippman highlights some possibilities here:

Any form or formal characteristic in music will have an unlimited number of symbolic possibilities; even intentional formlessness – aimless voice-leading or deliberately incorrect writing – has served as a symbol of confusion or chaos. Especially suggestive formal features are those of repetition and of sequence, of diminution and augmentation, of inversion, of antiphony, of the octave-relationship, and of the major-minor relationship. Canonic structure has often symbolized adherence to rule or plan, or rote repetition, or strictness and legality, or the simple physical relation of following, and these applications are far from exhaustive. The sonata and the symphony sometimes appear to contain a formal analogue of some dramatic situation, and the structural basis of much program music is to be found precisely in its resemblance to some extra-musical course of events.¹⁰⁸

106. Ibid., 15.

107. Ibid., 11.

108. Ibid., 9.

When one considers music and poetry to be similar art forms because they are both languages for aesthetic communication, the symbolic aspect becomes apparent in both. Poetry possesses an internal emotional symbolism that is enhanced by its explicit external references.¹⁰⁹ Absolute music, on the other hand, is not hampered by external connections and thus any internal emotional symbolism is left fully to subjective interpretation. Programme music, or music inspired by poetry, is the married middle ground with descriptive, textual reference points that may elicit a more defined, internal, emotional perspective. Poetic references in music essentially help to place key symbolic objects and concepts into context while allowing for self-reflection and understanding through musical contemplation.

When music is accompanied by a text, implicit and explicit symbolism becomes a natural consequence in both the senses and imagination. Lippman elaborates on this point:

Since music is almost always powerless to represent a specific external object, it can only point in a general direction, or rather, in several directions, the different responses it simultaneously creates all remaining unconsummated by definite objects. The object of a musical symbolization must be independently represented or presented – by a program or by dramatic action or by scenery or by words. But as soon as we specify this intended object, the music reveals unsuspected richness of significance. Each of its aspects develops a concrete and appropriate reference, and every side of our experience appears to bear on the one representation. The independence of the experience vanishes, but by that very fact the door is opened to innumerable symbolic relationships. For although musical symbols acquire their extramusical meaning through some explicit object, they will make their own use of their new concreteness, and, instead of referring to this object directly, may become figurative and express a related image or idea or mood. At times we may be able to distinguish two objects of the symbolism, implicit and explicit: the melodic motion may clearly symbolize waves, for example, when the text refers to the sea. We

109. Ibid., 17.

should then have a concealed figurative relation complementing the musical symbol, and the complete process would consist of a chain of symbols. Similarly, hidden but literal figures may be added to any musical symbols, all of which are themselves figures of one sort or another.¹¹⁰

Unlike Meyer, who defined *general* mood and *specific* emotions as separate entities in music, Lippman suggests that musical symbolism isn't always a clear issue with many symbolic experiences amalgamated with real ones because music itself is such an abstract art:

The categories in which we can divide the various objects of musical symbols are not sharply separated: emotions and moods are generally the concomitants of physical situations, and they are often attached to abstract notions as well. Abstractions have their eventual basis in concrete experience, both factual and emotional. And music itself, often an object of symbolization, is both a physical manifestation and a sensuous experience.¹¹¹

In light of Meyer's point of music not eliciting *specific* emotions, it would be fair to say that music brings about important *symbolic* ones. In that way, music provides the ideal atmosphere in which emotions can respond to a particular phenomenon in an aesthetic manner. Thus, poetry, with the use of words and objective concepts, serves to define and refine the musical experience by providing explicit references for which the musical experience was created to embody:

The common areas of musical symbolism – dramatic action, natural scenes, descriptive and lyric poetry – have a nature quite in accord with that of music, and they are well able to make use of the many-sidedness of musical response. The emotional components of events are especially attractive and accessible to music no matter what it sets out to symbolize. For although music contains an internal symbolism of emotions, its own emotional qualities will easily fasten onto represented things and become specific symbols of the feelings

110. Ibid., 22-23.

111. Ibid., 23-4.

connected with external happenings. Whatever resemblance our musical experience may bear to other matters is made explicit by the outside reference.¹¹²

What poetry does, in essence, is *colour* the musical experience a particular way with its textual references: “It is peculiar to music that we can ... engage in independent perceptual activity while we listen; and it does not transform the experience, but only colours it differently.”¹¹³ Poetry can offer a guide to the imagination as the musical experience unfolds for the listener.

Secondly, Lippman discusses the relationship between music and poetry with reference to *motion*. Unlike visual art, which is often two-dimensional and static, music and poetry contain a *start* and *finish* point as the experience unfolds in *real* time. Lippman explains here:

Another basic formal relationship between music and other events is that of motion, and indeed the term in itself is fully applicable to music. The motional experience that music contains is intrinsically quite similar to our experience of physical motion, and it follows almost as a matter of course that one readily falls into correspondence with the other. Thus music can depict real events insofar as they are constituted by motion, and it can depict objects by representing the motions characteristic of them. A prolonged tone or chord will represent a stationary object or a changeless state, while a [rapid] musical change ... is a natural symbol for an external happening of related speed.¹¹⁴

The feeling and sensation of progression renders music and poetry a three-dimensional experience – it feels like one is going somewhere on a journey without actually having left one’s seat:

112. Ibid., 24.

113. Ibid., 38.

114. Ibid., 9.

The feeling that music is progressing or moving forward in time is doubtless one of the most fundamental characteristics of musical experience; yet it manifests such a remarkable range of variation in its prominence and its quality that at times [movement] seems to be absent altogether.¹¹⁵

According to Lippman, motion in music is accomplished by one or more combinations of three methods, which he illustrates through examples in a Beethoven sonata and Brahms' *Piano Concerto No. 2*. These concepts will be explained here in brief and applied to the analysis of my music in Chapter 2:

a) Musical progression occurs through successive forces of inertia and insistence. More specifically, through melodic and harmonic conflict and resolve, there exists a forward motion where particular musical 'problems' arise and are 'solved' or possibly left hanging.¹¹⁶ Consequently,

[It is] largely the forces of melodic and harmonic resolution, which produce impulses pointing to immanent satisfaction. Generally, melodic instability is associated with harmonic dissonance, and the connection of the two gives added impetus to the forward force.¹¹⁷

b) Musical progression occurs by logical movement of its parts and phrases. Lippman explains further:

The ...fundamental kind of temporal progress in music is what we may call logic of consecution. It is based on structural interrelationships between or within phrases, which comprise a large variety of types of repetition and modified repetition but also an equally large variety of types of resemblance and contrast and reaction.¹¹⁸

115. Ibid., 40.

116. Ibid., 41-2.

117. Ibid., 47.

118. Ibid., 48.

c) **Musical progression occurs by succession and continuity.** According to Lippman, this involves a falling into the past with a simultaneous motion towards the future, the propensity of musical propulsion, and the varying of dynamics:

It would seem ...that **musical continuity**...would rely directly on the intrinsic character of consciousness, on the falling away into the past and the motion into the future, both at a speed, however, that is determined by the speed of the music. Each repetition of a phrase makes the falling away evident, while within each phrase the motion forward is more prominent. **Musical propulsion**, however, adds to this natural forward flow a special impetus that seems due more to the music itself than to the normal workings of the unconsciousness. Regularity and speed seem to superimpose an intensity on the motion and at the same time emphasize the forward direction while suppressing the backward one. **Crescendos** have the same effect. And the impulsive force of accents, of short bursts of rapid notes on upbeats, and of melodic and harmonic resolution provides additional propulsion that is still more clearly attached to the auditory objects themselves, which carry us, nevertheless, along with them.¹¹⁹

Furthermore, through the 'logic of consecution' – i.e., the motion naturally resulting from repetition of similar or same material as well as introduction of new material – the music inevitably moves forward with each note and phrase:

Finally the **logic of consecution** that is due to the relationship of successive patterns to earlier ones, to relationships of repetition, resemblance, and divergence, rests on the retentive powers of memory and particularly on the retention of vivid images of patterns heard immediately before. A newly sounding motif or phrase not only makes sense because of its relationship to what has just preceded but also follows this in a convincing manner because it follows *from* it in some sense. The preceding image is the basis of logical consecution, just as the trace in memory is the basis in general of formal coherence,

119. Ibid., 62.

which makes use of recurrence and resemblance after the intervention of time and of other musical material.¹²⁰

Thirdly, it is important to note Lippman's observations of the tonal idealisms in Romantic music, as these characteristics are also found in my piano music from poetry. The two main properties are 1) *vagueness* in tone colour referring to a lack of definiteness, and 2) *fusion*, which results from a blending or mixture of tone colours.

Lippman explains:

The Romantic ideal of tone can be compactly characterized by means of two related properties: vagueness, or lack of definition, and fusion, or blending. The first of these is applicable to individual tones as well as to tonal simultaneity, while blending is less a separate property than the polyphonic result of a lack of constituent tones.¹²¹

The characteristic of *vagueness* is often found in Romantic literature, so it is unsurprising that the subsequent music should reflect this quality:

All these changes in the tonal constitution of music have their complement in the musical descriptions of Romantic literature, where the new ideals of sonority seem to find a much more striking expression than in music itself. Both the vagueness and the elemental qualities of tone are illustrated by the frequent association of music with water or air, and the vagueness is emphasized still more by distance, echo, and reverberation. Night and darkness, regarded as the ideal setting of musical performance, provide a final enhancement of tonal indefiniteness.¹²²

As such, Romantic *poetry* and other arts frequently contain elements of vagueness and blending; therefore, its aesthetic appeal lies precisely in its lack of definition.

120. Ibid., 63.

121. Ibid., 123.

122. Ibid., 124.

In the aesthetic and philosophical writings of the Romantic period we have the most explicit and convincing evidence that the tonal ideal of an epoch is bound up with its most fundamental ideas and attitudes. Jean Paul's *Vorschule des Aesthetik* conceives the vagueness and blending of music as its peculiarly Romantic qualities, for the essence of Romanticism is taken to be expanse and lack of confinement. This is valid for visual art and poetry, not only for music, and indeed we find the same changes in sensuous ideal occurring within the sphere of each individual art.¹²³

Romantic literature and poetry are littered with the use of motifs. It is often connected to medievalism; as well as a mystic, religious, cathartic devotion. One also associates Romantic art with the fantastical including fairies, sprites, saints, celestial beings and the like. Lippman points out elements of *fusion* and *distance*, where the source of sound is obscured through an indefinite spatial placement:

It is scarcely to be wondered at, then, that music appeared as the Romantic art par excellence, for a lack of objectivity, a fluent and transient character is inherent to it. While we are scarcely aware of light as such, but only of its source or the object from which it is reflected, with tone it is the opposite, so that the spatial definiteness of the source always tends to be supplanted by the spatial indefiniteness of the wave motion of transmission.¹²⁴

In Romantic poetry and literature, the surreal atmosphere resulting from the vagueness and obscure placement of sound is what Lippman describes as the property of *reverb*, which is commonly misnamed 'echo':

It is understandable...that reverberation appears as the chief characteristic of the Romantic tonal ideal in its literary descriptions. The quality is often misnamed 'echo' but it is certainly the most important member of a family of properties that includes echo, diffuseness, extensiveness, fusion and distance. The common effect of these is to obscure the tonal source, to prevent a clear

123. Ibid., 128.

124. Ibid., 128-9.

perception of it by disguising its nature, concealing its position, and blending it with other sources simultaneously activated.¹²⁵

These points are important to note particularly with regard to the modes of hearing a work, particularly in considering a traditional classical hearing versus a Romanticized listening to music. In the former, the sounds are clear and unambiguous while in the latter, tonal blends contribute to its sensational, emotional qualities:

In a [Classic mode], hearing is perceptually oriented; the sources of sound are objects of interest; and since precision of location and the identity of the sound producer are of primary importance, hearing cooperates with vision and is subjected to it, as the sense of superior clarity and perceptual ability. In Romantic hearing, on the other hand, sound is not taken in its usual practical importance as an index of the location and identity of the objects of the external world, but more in its own terms, in its peculiar sensational qualities, and in their meaning as a revelation of emotion and being – of the inner nature of life and the natural world.¹²⁶

In sum, the Lippman text explains symbolism and emotional content in music and poetry; the methods of progression and motion in music, and subsequently also applicable in poetry; as well as the *vagueness* and *fusion* properties found in Romantic art forms. Thus, it provides an interesting array of thoughts in examining the relationship between music and poetry in the context of my piano music from poetry.

125. Ibid., 129.

126. Ibid., 131.

Chapter 2: Explanation and Analysis of My Piano Music from Poetry

Once in the Dream...

This piece was composed in early 2008. I remember falling in love with the dreamy, whimsical sensation in the first 10 bars with the open fifths and wondered how I might develop the idea even further. It was quite some time before the stream-like section following was conceived and revised several times over in 2009 until I was truly satisfied with the texture. For this piece, as well as the three others in this thesis, I began with a melodic and harmonic idea (i.e. the first few bars) and soon after found an appropriate text to guide the movement and direction of the music.

The inspiration for *Once in the Dream...* is from the poem “Song of a Dream”¹ (see text in Chapter 3) by Sarojini Naidu, an early 20th-century poet, freedom fighter and child prodigy. Naidu was the first Indian woman to become the president of the Indian National Congress and the first woman to become the Governor of Uttar Pradesh, a province in India. I find the images conjured by the text are simply beautiful, and guide the dreamy, ethereal sentiment conveyed in the work.

The opening theme in the first 10 bars (as well as in mm. 36-45 and mm. 152-162) suggest a far-away idyllic place where one is slowly drifting into a dream-like fairy land. The fast moving section immediately following provides flowing, contrasting motion. One immediately thinks of the textures in Franz Liszt’s third

1. Sarojini Naidu, “Song of a Dream” from *The Golden Threshold*, (New York: John Lane Company, 1916) <http://www.poetry-archive.com/n/song_of_a_dream.html>.

piano concert étude, “Un sospiro” (i.e. *A sigh*)², with the lovely 16th-note motion over a ringing melodic structure: this is the model for measures 11 to 24 of *Once Upon a Dream*.... Note that the melody here (F-F-G-G-Bb-Bb-D-C-C-Bb-...-Bb-C-D)

Example 1. *Once in the Dream*..., melody notes in mm. 11-24.



is found as the subject several times in the fugal section later on in measures 72-107.³ The motif, for the most part, is transposed up a semi-tone, and is not dissimilar when one sees it juxtaposed as follows:

Example 2. *Once in the Dream*..., melody in mm. 11-24 similar to subject in mm. 72-107.

Mm. 11-24: F - F - G - G - Bb - Bb - D - C - C - Bb - (F) - Bb - C - D
 Subject: F#- F#- G#- G#-A# - A# - D#- C#- C#- A#- A# - C#- D#



I anticipate that the ear will consciously pick out this tune as it builds cohesion and progressive motion into the work. An altered version of this motif is found throughout the piece, including in the ostinato base line in mm. 123-130; in the

2. Franz Liszt, “Trois études de concert: No. 3 Un sospiro”, Van Cliburn, Sony Disc A6 51500.

3. When I think about inspiration for fugal writing, Bach’s “Prelude and Fugue # 11 in F major” and Shostakovich’s “Prelude and Fugue No. 5 in D major” come to mind, as I recall working on these piano pieces around the time of composing this piece. See Discography for details.

pounding octaves⁴ of the right hand in the *Con fuoco* section in mm. 133 - 138; a similar version as the base line in 139-143; and finally, as a closing tinkling in the upper registers of the piano in the final three measures (mm 164 - 167). The latter portion of the piece, from a transitional passage in measures 54 - 71 and onwards from there, uses all black notes – that is, an Ionian pentatonic beginning on F# – which brings about a certain dreamy, Asian quality to the tone colour that I especially like: this is a particular sonority I find myself using often in piano pieces I compose.

In relation to “the particular” in poetry, the accompanying music provides a general amplification of the emotional underlay of the text. The key word in this piece is ‘dream’ and so the text and music all lead back to that sleepy, general mood – one has images of fairy tales, stars, singing birds, flowing streams, sleeping children, magical woodlands and the like, as the poem particularizes. Certainly, one can make speculative associations between the text and the music; for example, there is fast-paced, stream-like motion in mm. 11 – 35 and mm. 36 – 53 which may be associated with “streams of the spirit of Peace that flow” (line 13 and prefigured in line 6) in the poem. Any specific correlation as such is speculation, as I cannot recall consciously considering such specific details at the time of composing.

One of the key concepts of this piece is that of *space*: there is a restless, airy quality in the overall mood of the music that reflects the emotion in the poetry. The sense of an *infinite distance* is created within my music by using a marking of *Adagio*

4. Upon some personal musical reflection, I think that the strength of the pounding octaves remind me of Beethoven, and specifically, *Piano Sonata, Op. 27, No. 2 “Moonlight.”* It has the strength of the *Presto agitato* of the third movement, but with the grace of an *Allegretto* from the second movement. See Discography for details.

ad libitum, emphasizing that the music ought to project a “whimsical, ethereal sentiment” (tempo instructions at beginning of score), such that the performer can *feel* through the music as opposed to simply *playing* through it. With regard to space and distance, influences of Claude Debussy’s piano music come to mind, and in particular, “La cathédrale engloutie” and “Pagodes” from *Estampes*.⁵

Sorrow’s Tune

Sorrow’s Tune was begun during my final undergraduate year at Queen’s University (2006) under the watchful eye of my composition teacher at the time, Canadian composer Marjan Mozetich. The tone of the music is dark. It draws its inspiration from the gloomy but strangely beautiful text, “Sonnet # 2”⁶ (see text in Chapter 3), by 19th-century Scottish poet James B. V. Thomson (1834-1882). With his most famous work being *The City of Dreadful Night* (first published 1874), Thomson is known for extensive bleak subject matter in his poetry. Raised in an orphan asylum, he later became an army teacher in Ireland but was dismissed from the service for a minor offense in 1862. Throughout his life, Thomson was described as being “lonely and impoverished, aggravated by insomnia, his own incredibly melancholic disposition, and periodic bouts with alcoholism.”⁷ It does not appear that Thomson had a happy life, and his poetry is deeply reflective of this.

5. Claude Debussy, *Preludes; Estampes; Masques; Images; Children's corner / Debussy*, Noël Lee, Naïves CD V 1001.

6. James Thomson, “Sonnet # 2” from 2 *Sonnets*, <<http://www.sonnets.org/thomson.htm>>.

7. “James Thomson,” *The Columbia Encyclopedia*, Sixth Edition, Encyclopedia.com. (June 25, 2009). <<http://www.encyclopedia.com/doc/1E1-ThmsnJ2.html>>.

I remember working on this piece mostly late at night: I had the first 21 bars in my head for the longest time and wasn't sure what to do with it. When I happened to stumble across Thomson's "Sonnet # 2," I was most enlightened with the particular imagery that it provided which guided the music toward completion. This is possibly one of the saddest poems I've ever read: each stanza contains language that is dark and solemn without any sense of resolve.

The form of the poem is somewhat mirrored in the music: the poem begins with the speaker "striving to sing glad songs" (line 1) only to find that in the end, "My grief finds harmonies in everything" (line 14). Likewise, the form of the music begins with a characteristic opening theme (mm. 1-27) where one pictures the poet "striving to sing glad songs" (line 1 of poem), is followed by developing material (mm. 28-61) where sorrow and sadness encompass the general mood, and concludes with a return of the theme virtually unaltered (mm. 62-89) to suggest that the mood of the poet has not been particularly uplifted while progressing through the poem. A brief finale (mm. 90 – 99) fades off *niente* (nothing). Like the poem, the music explores various ideas but its initial position does not change: there is no final consolation for the original mood of heavy sorrow.

The mode of *Sorrow's Tune* is E-Phrygian, which I feel gives it a desolate tone that carries forth the melancholy expressed in the poetry. I was particularly moved by the last two lines in the text, "My mirth can laugh and talk, but cannot sing; / My grief finds harmonies in everything" (line 13-14) where the music challenges the ear's acceptance of conventional dissonance tones and intervals, namely that of the

tritone, which is found littered throughout the piece. My ears find the augmented fourth a beautiful colour in spite of its devilish connotations, and my hope as the composer is to bring out this sublime quality through the music.

In this piece particularly, an overwhelming sense of *vagueness* stems from tones being purposely blended together to achieve *fusion* at points where the pedal is held down and the pitches are naturally blurred together. When these tones accumulate in quantity, it imparts an inevitable forward *motion* to the music. For example, in measure 32, the right hand begins with triplet eighth notes on C – B – A while the left hand strikes the G in 7/4 meter. In the following measure, the right hand plays through a series of 16th-notes C – B – A – G: it is the pattern from before with the G added, as if it had “swallowed” the note from the left hand melody, which increases its velocity and intensity. This pattern continues likewise: in the measure after that (m. 34), the right hand notes move even faster in quintuplets of C – B – A – G – F, “swallowing” the F from the bass note in the previous bar.

Through a series of dramatic crescendos and decrescendos, the piece eventually reaches a climactic portion after a dramatic, improvised bar 56 builds toward a loud, thundering intensity heard in measures 57-59. In Thomson’s poem, “Their anthem surges in the tempest boom; / The skies outroll no solemn thunder psalm / Till they have clothed themselves with clouds of doom” (lines 10-12) come to mind. My hope is that the listener will, at the very least, be delighted to make an unconscious – if not conscious – connection there between the text and the thundering E’s in the bass line of those measures.

The sense of *space* and *distance* is achieved in this piece by using the near-complete range of the keyboard. This gives the music a writhing, emotional tension that I feel is abounding in Thomson's poem. As the composer, my goal for this piece is to illustrate not merely *a sense* of sadness but moreover, an *overwhelming depth* of sorrow that the poet in the text is conveying.

Spring Dawn

I love Chinese poetry: it is an ancient art that I marvel at with delight. *Spring Dawn*⁸ – in Mandarin, it's pronounced "Chūn Xiǎo" – takes its name and inspiration from the poem by Chinese poet Meng Hao-Jan (689-740). In December 2007, I had received a rainstick as a lovely Christmas gift, and was determined to put it to good use. Meng's poem, teeming with cheerful and vibrant imagery, combined with a rainstick, one passionate composer (I started and completed the piece in less than a week), and a piano resulted in this particular adventurous and fun musical creation.

Meng Hao-Jan was one of few Chinese poets who did not pursue an official career in civil service. Rather than subject himself to the predictable, structured life of city work in government bureaucracy, Meng spent much of his time in the mountainous regions of the countryside of Hsiangyang, China. Thus, his poetry developed with an unusual flair as it did not follow the predominant literary tastes of the cultural centers in his time but, rather, the natural surroundings of a simple life.

8. Meng Hao-Jan, "Spring Dawn" from *Poems of the Masters: China's Classic Anthology of T'ang and Sung Dynasty Verse*, Trans. by Red Pine (United States: Copper Canyon Press, 2003), 8.

According to the source text *Poems of the Masters: China's Classic Anthology of*

T'ang and Sung Dynasty Verse, Meng

...had little interest in worldly goals and preferred to sleep late -- while his friends in the capital were at court before dawn. Even as winter [became] spring, Meng [was] still sleeping late and [wasn't] wakened by the sun but by the sound of birds beginning their spring courtship. Still, this too [failed] to drive him from his bed, and he [was] content to wonder about the scene outside without feeling the need to do anything about it.⁹

Though the poem *Spring Dawn* (see text in Chapter 3) is very short, there is beauty in its simplicity as I was not bombarded with too many images and ideas; instead, I felt steered in a certain direction and given ample room to imagine as I pleased. The poet Meng fascinates me with his carefree attitude and seemingly endless bouts of time – few people I know “wonder how many petals fell” (line 4) following a rainfall. How much *free time* one must have to ponder such things!

The key word of the poem is “spring” and the details of the poem center around this particular season – the birds, the wind, the rain, and the flower petals. In my mind, there are other associations I make with *spring* such as the bright sunshine as well as children playing outdoors after a long and dreary winter. Such vibrant imagery is marked in the score, with hopes that the pianist will enjoy these sentiments and strive to express them in performance. This includes “chirping, like birds” in measure 2; “gently, as petals fall” in measure 4; “an ethereal texture reminiscent of the sunrise” in unbarred measures 87-93; “playful, like children dancing” for the jumpy baseline in measures 75-80; and my favourite, “lightly, like raindrops” for the

9. Red Pine, trans., *Poems of the Masters*, (United States: Copper Canyon Press, 2003) 8-9.

music at measures 128-161. Here, the poetry becomes literally translated into the music, bringing the emotion and action in the text to life through movement of sound. When I think back to when I was writing this piece, I would definitely say that Debussy's piano music¹⁰ was a tremendous influence, particularly with its flowing textures and poetic allusions.

The musical work *Spring Dawn* has a memorable motif that is repeated many times throughout the work. It is first introduced in the treble line in measure 7 and continues to the second beat of measure 14. In my mind, the tune reminds me of a folk-like Chinese melody I seem to recall from childhood. The Chinese text of the accompanying poem by Meng Hao-Jan (see the Chinese text in the score in Chapter 3) has exactly 20 characters, and likewise, the melody consists of twenty notes. In my imagination, I hear a chorus of children cheerfully reciting their poetry lesson of the day, which is not an uncommon practice for Chinese children with an educational emphasis on rote memory.

The motif is also varied and fragmented in a fugal section from bars 96-124, where I experiment with it on different starting notes: for example, it begins on an F# in beat three of bar 105 in the treble line, on a D# in measure 114, also on the A# in the bass line on the third beat of measure 117. The constant repetition and slight variances of the melodic material create a sense of *progress* and *motion*: the music, like the accompanying poetry, begins and develops from that point onward.

10. Claude Debussy, "Arabesque No. 1 & 2," "Children's Corner: I. Doctor Gradus ad Parnassum," and "Clair de lune" from *Debussy: Images; Arabesques; Children's Corner; Clair de Lune; L'Isle Joyeuse*, Simon Trpceski, EMI Classics CD B000ZBPQDU.

Like my other piano works, the full range of the keyboard is thoroughly used for musical expression, as illustrated right in the first bar with a dramatic double glissando spanning across the upper and lower range of pitches and thus creating a sense of vast *space* and *distance* from start to finish. The emotional goal of *Spring Dawn* is to create an atmosphere which mimics the new life and warmth of springtime through various timbre choices: in this way, the *general* mood in the music amplifies the *particular* details in the poetry.

Drinking Alone by Moonlight

This piece was inspired by Li Bai's sonnet "Drinking Alone by Moonlight"¹¹ (see text in Chapter 3). The poem has a witty, sardonic, dark flavour that I strive to bring out in the composition. This is the most current of my pieces, started sometime in August 2008 and finished about two months later in early October 2008. While my other works generally have one pervasive mood, I took a risk in this one by having it alternate between a quick, lively theme and a slower, contemplative one within one work, thereby creating a somewhat schizophrenic atmosphere that is consistent with the mood of the speaker in the text. Having a work change moods quickly throughout was something I'd never done before in composing: I was never quite sure if I could make it work. The most influential musical composition in relation to this piece is the first movement of William Westcott's *Sonatina*,¹² where the music shifts every few

11. Li Bai. *Drinking Alone by Moonlight*, see Bibliography for details.

12. William Westcott, *Sonatina*, live performances in 2008 and 2009.

phrases between a quick, lively theme and a slower, dreamy one. I vaguely recall the music of Alexina Louie¹³ and even some night music by Chopin¹⁴ that may have unconsciously elicited the sentiments of moonlight and stars.

Li Bai (701 – 762) was a famous poet in the T'ang Dynasty (618 – 906); in fact, considered one of China's two greatest poets along with Tu Fu.¹⁵ Li was born in what is now Kyrgyzstan and grew up in the Szechuan province just north of its capital Chengtu. He was a favourite of the courts for a brief period of time, but soon lost their favour and led a carefree life travelling throughout China. Li has over 1000 poems attributed to him.¹⁶ Many of his poems embrace the pleasures of wine, and Li himself had a less than sober reputation. When I think about Li Bai, I am reminded of perhaps his most famous work, "Thoughts on a Quiet Night" from childhood: it was a common poem many had to memorize in Chinese school. In Chinese, it reads:

床前明月光 (Chuáng qián míng yuè guāng)
 疑是地上霜 (Yí shì dì shàng shuāng)
 舉頭望明月 (Jǔ tóu wáng míng yuè)
 低頭思故鄉 (Dī tóu sī gù xiāng)¹⁷

13. Alexina Louie, *Shattered Night, Shivering Stars*, CBC CD B00000JIZS.

14. Frédéric Chopin, "Nocturne in D flat, Op. 27, No. 2" and "Berceuse in D flat, op. 57" from *Great pianists of the 20th century: Artur Rubinstein*, Artur Rubinstein, Philips Classics CD 456 955-2.

15. Red Pine, trans., *Poems of the Masters*, (United States: Copper Canyon Press, 2003) 5.

16. *Ibid.*, 64.

17. Li Bai, *Thoughts on a Still Night*, <<http://www.chinese-poems.com/lb4t.html>>.

The English translation reads:

Before my bed the light is so bright
 It looks like a layer of frost
 Lifting my head I gaze at the moon
 Lying back down I think of home.¹⁸

In the original Chinese language, the poem sounds much better, as it reads with a flowing rhythmic feel in four lines of five characters each and a rhyme scheme of A-B-C-B. As a child, I rolled my eyes at having to memorize another lesson in the textbook and it is only in my more recent adult years that I am able to fully appreciate the simple beauty of Li Bai's poems.

Li Bai's "Drinking Alone by Moonlight" also surrounds the topic of alcohol and moonshine, but unlike the self-reflective mood found in "Thoughts on a Quiet Night", the poet appears in a drunken fit. I read Li Bai's sonnet "Drinking Alone by Moonlight" with amusement; the poem makes me chuckle a little. I have a mental picture of bumbling, drunken man wandering around aimlessly under a bright and clear starry night. He is alone and delusional to the point that he proclaims the moon and his own shadow to be his buddies: "I raise my cup to invite the moon, who blends / Her light with my shadow and we're three friends" (lines 3-4). I find the whole situation humorous, light-hearted, and downright silly: it was with these sentiments that I began the piece.

The form is loosely a quasi-rondo form, where a catchy motif (mm. 1-2) is found recurring many times as transposed tonal variations throughout the work. In

18. Red Pine, trans., *Poems of the Masters*, (United States: Copper Canyon Press, 2003), 65.

measure 1, the motif begins on a D; in measure 3, it commences on an A; in measure 13, it begins on an F; in measure 45, it starts on E; in measure 47, it starts on a B: note that these are the only five tones – D, E, F, A, and B¹⁹ – used in measures 1 – 57 before a key change occurs.

Likewise, in the latter part of the piece (in measures 58 to the end when the music moves into different key), this *modus operandi* of having the motif transposed tonally with slight variations is also employed on each pitch of the new pentatonic scale. In bar 65, the motif begins on a C#; in bar 67, it starts on a G#; in bar 69, it starts on an F#; in bar 71, starts on a D#; in bar 73, it starts on a C# again; and in bar 75, it starts on an A#. This time, it is uses pentatonic pitches of F#, G#, A#, C# and D# with the intervals of an Ionian pentatonic with the tonic note being F#: thus, one would say that the latter part of the piece uses the F#-Ionian pentatonic mode. I purposely varied the motif tonally on each pentatonic pitch to allow for interesting melodic relations: each time the melody begins on a different pitch, the motif is rendered a little differently than before. And each time the motif occurs, I envision the poet taking another sip from his cup and heartily having a conversation with himself (or perhaps his shadow or even the moon).

While some pitches are clearly heard (such as in the motif), other passages including one marked “Dreamily” in mm. 5-12 require use of the pedal to blend the tones together. This creates a sense of appropriate *vagueness* to correspond with the

19. The use of these five pitches suggest a modified pentatonic with a Dorian minor third (D is heard as the tonic). The traditional Ionian pentatonic has the notes C, D, E, G, A and has intervals of major second, major third, perfect fifth and major 6th intervals (in relation to the tonic note C); by contrast, the pentatonic pitches I use in *Drinking Alone by Moonlight* have the same intervals, except the major third is lowered to a minor third, and thus it is considered to be a modified pentatonic.

emotional content of the poetry, which hints at a speaker who is not quite in his sound mind. As in my other piano pieces, extensive range of the keyboard is used to create a sensation of *space* and *timelessness*, particularly in the *senza misura* section found in mm. 25-29, which allows for the performer to play passionately at will without any specific tempo constraints.

The text in the poem indicates there is only one character – the poet himself – who manages to entertain himself by socializing with the moon and his own shadow. The speaker is not merely *alone* – he is *desperately alone* to compel himself to such drunkenness. I feel this speaks subconsciously to mankind’s innate sense of loneliness and natural need for company, even when none is available. Someone once remarked to me that measures 15-20 and measures 49-54 in the music sounded like a tango dance passage, by which I am reminded of the lines in the poem, “I sing the moon to linger with my song; / My shadow disperses as I *dance* along” (lines 9-10). It is a bizarre one-man dance, and the uneven rhythm in the base line attests to that particular image.

The key word in the title of this poem is not ‘alone’; rather, it is ‘drinking’ and so a lighthearted, fun, drunken sentiment becomes the overarching mood in the music. The emotional content of the poem is amplified in a rich pentatonic tonality in music meant to be played “freely, with a feisty spirit” (tempo marking), bringing Li Bai’s text to life through my imaginative, musical interpretation.

Once in the Dream...

Written for Piano

Composed by Joannie Ing
Joannie.Ing@gmail.com

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This piece was inspired in part by...

Song of a Dream

Once in the dream of a night I stood
Lone in the light of a magical wood,
Soul-deep in visions that poppy-like sprang;
And spirits of Truth were the birds that sang,
And spirits of Love were the stars that glowed,
And spirits of Peace were the streams that flowed
In that magical wood in the land of sleep.

Lone in the light of that magical grove,
I felt the stars of the spirits of Love
Gather and gleam round my delicate youth,
And I heard the song of the spirits of Truth;
To quench my longing I bent me low
By the streams of the spirits of Peace that flow
In that magical wood in the land of sleep.

Poet Sarojini Naidu
(1879-1949)

Once in the Dream...

J. Ing

Adagio ad libitum (with a whimsical, ethereal sentiment)

Piano



p *f*

Flowing,
like streams

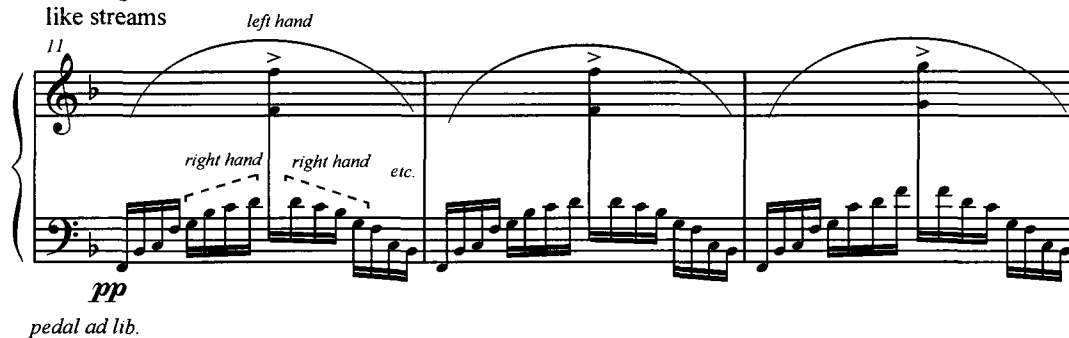
11

left hand

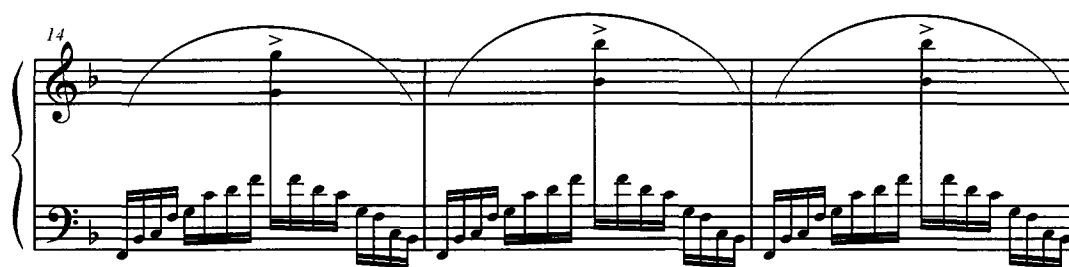
right hand right hand etc.

pp

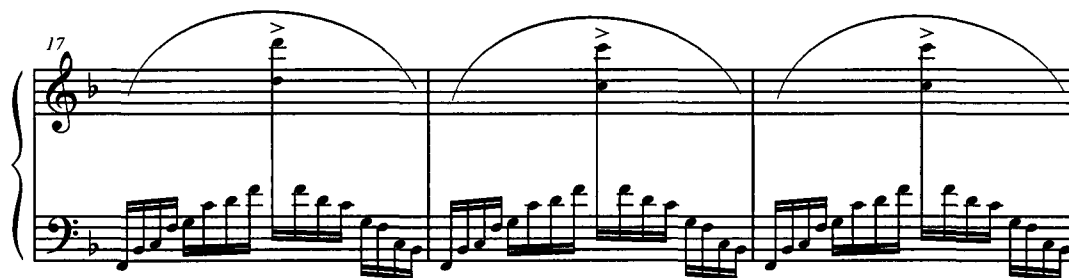
pedal ad lib.



14



17



2

20

21

22

23

24

25

L'istesso tempo

25

mf

26

27

L'istesso tempo

26

repeat ad lib.

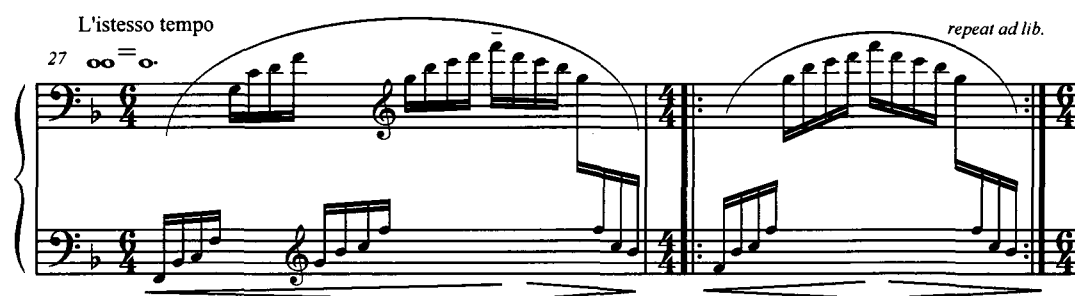
27

28

L'istesso tempo

27 $\infty = \circ$

repeat ad lib.

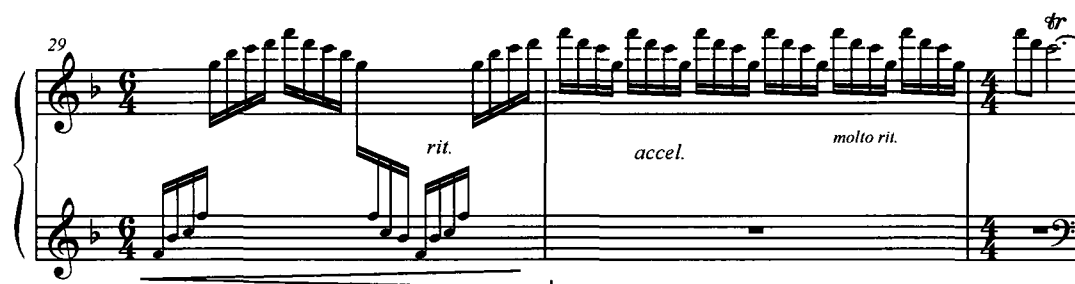


29

rit.

accel.

molto rit.



32

rit.

a tempo

accel.

rit.

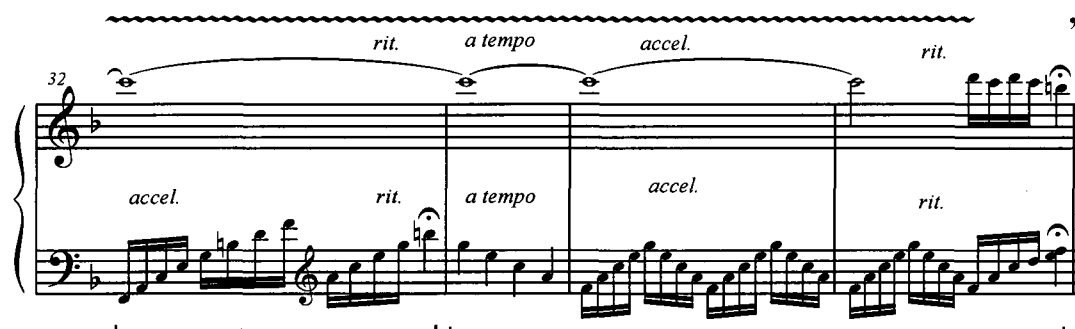
accel.

rit.

a tempo

accel.

rit.



Ethereal, like beginning

36

p

ff



4

Flowing, like streams

46 *repeat ad lib.*

L'istesso tempo

repeat ad lib.

48 L'istesso tempo *repeat ad lib.*

49 L'istesso tempo *repeat ad lib.*

51 *accel.* *rit.*

The musical score consists of four systems of piano music. Each system has a grand staff with a treble and bass clef. The first system (measures 46-47) begins with a key signature of one flat and a 4/4 time signature. It features a melodic line in the right hand and a supporting line in the left hand. The second system (measures 48-49) continues the melodic development. The third system (measures 50-51) shows a change in the right-hand melody. The fourth system (measure 51) includes dynamic markings for acceleration and deceleration.

53

accel. *rit.* *p*

3

58

accel. *f* 8va-----

65

(8va)----- *rit.*

72

p *Dolce* (8va)-----

81 *(8^{va})*

89 *(8^{va})*

98

106

Majestically

115

rit. *f* *fff* *molto rit.*

8^{va}-

123

a tempo *pp*

una corda

(8^{va})-

125

(8^{va})-

127

(8^{va})-

8

129

rit.

tre corde

(8vb)

131

accel.

rit.

(8vb)

133

Con fuoco

f

(8vb)

135

ff

rit.

(8vb)

a tempo *rit.*

8^{va}-----

137 *fff*

(8^{vb})-----

139 *Allargando* *rit.* *a tempo*

p

(8^{vb})-----

141

(8^{vb})-----

rit. *a tempo*

8^{va}-----

143 *mp*

(8^{vb})-----

10

145

mf *f*

8va *8va*

(8vb)

147

p

accel. *rit.*

8vb

152

pp

Ethereal, like beginning

8vb

162

fff *f* *15ma* *8va* *p*

*Glissando **

(8vb)

* Glissando on black notes only

Sorrow's Tune

Written for Piano

Composed by Joannie Ing

Joannie.Ing@gmail.com

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*This piece was inspired by James B. V. Thomson
(1834-82)'s*

Sonnet # 2

Striving to sing glad songs, I but attain
Wild discords sadder than Grief's saddest tune;
As if an owl with his harsh screech should strain
To over-gratulate a thrush of June.

The nightingale upon its thorny spray
Finds inspiration in the sullen dark;
The kindling dawn, the world-wide joyous day
Are inspiration to the soaring lark;

The seas are silent in the sunny calm,
Their anthem surges in the tempest boom;
The skies outroll no solemn thunder psalm
Till they have clothed themselves with clouds of doom.

My mirth can laugh and talk, but cannot sing;
My grief finds harmonies in everything.

Sorrow's Tune

J. Ing

Freely, Andante ad libitum ♩. circa 77

Piano

p *mp* *mf* *mf*

etc.

* Composer's Note: Note tied to a rest indicates for the sound to 'ring over.'

2

17

p

21

24

28

p

_____ con pedal ad libitum

***Composer's Note: Bars 32-56 in the right hand are to show intended texture. Performer may choose not to follow precisely and add own interpretation.**

***Composer's Note: Bars 32-56 in the right hand are to show intended texture. Performer may choose not to follow precisely and add own interpretation.**

The image displays a page of musical notation for a piano piece, consisting of four systems of staves. The notation is written for a grand piano, with a treble and bass staff joined by a brace on the left. The piece is in 7/4 time and includes a key signature change to two flats (B-flat and E-flat).

System 1 (Measures 40-41): The right hand features a rapid, continuous sixteenth-note scale in the treble clef, with fingerings marked '5' above each note. The left hand plays a slower, more rhythmic pattern in the bass clef, with a four-measure rest indicated by a bracket and the number '4'. A crescendo hairpin is present in the right hand.

System 2 (Measures 42-43): The right hand continues the sixteenth-note scale. The left hand has a four-measure rest followed by a measure with a triplet of eighth notes and a final quarter note. A dynamic marking of *f* (forte) appears in the right hand.

System 3 (Measures 44-45): The right hand continues the sixteenth-note scale. The left hand has a four-measure rest followed by a measure with a triplet of eighth notes and a final quarter note. A dynamic marking of *f* (forte) appears in the right hand.

System 4 (Measures 46-47): The right hand continues the sixteenth-note scale. The left hand has a four-measure rest followed by a measure with a triplet of eighth notes and a final quarter note. A dynamic marking of *f* (forte) appears in the right hand.

Measures 48-50. Treble clef, 6/4 time. Measures 48-49: Treble has sixteenth-note runs with fingerings 5, 5, 5, 5, 5, 5, 5, 5. Bass has triplet eighth notes. Measure 50: Treble continues with a final 5. Bass has a triplet eighth note followed by a half note, then a measure with a half note and a triplet eighth note. The word *accel.* is written above the bass staff.

Measures 50-52. Treble clef, 6/4 time. Measure 50: Treble has sixteenth-note runs with fingerings 5, 5, 5, 5, 5, 5, 5. Bass has triplet eighth notes. Measure 51: Treble continues with a final 5. Bass has a triplet eighth note followed by a half note, then a measure with a half note and a triplet eighth note. The word *ff* is written below the bass staff. Measure 52: Treble has a half note. Bass has a half note. The word *a tempo* is written above the bass staff. A dashed line with *8vb* is below the bass staff.

Measures 52-54. Treble clef, 6/4 time. Measure 52: Treble has sixteenth-note runs with fingerings 5, 5, 5, 5, 5, 5, 5, 5. Bass has triplet eighth notes. Measure 53: Treble continues with a final 5. Bass has a triplet eighth note followed by a half note, then a measure with a half note and a triplet eighth note. The word *accel.* is written above the bass staff. Measure 54: Treble has a half note. Bass has a half note. The word *f* is written below the bass staff.

Measures 54-56. Treble clef, 6/4 time. Measure 54: Treble has sixteenth-note runs with fingerings 5, 5, 5, 5. Bass has triplet eighth notes. Measure 55: Treble continues with a final 5. Bass has a triplet eighth note followed by a half note, then a measure with a half note and a triplet eighth note. The word *rit.* is written above the bass staff. Measure 56: Treble has a half note. Bass has a half note. The word *pp* is written below the bass staff. The word *accel.* is written above the bass staff.

6

56

Composer's Note: Free Bar(s) of improvisation at performer's discretion where left hand and right hand maintain a distance of a 9th in similar scalar runs

f *fff*

8vb

60

p *mp*

64

mp

etc. (like beginning)

68

mf

72

mf

This system contains measures 72 through 75. The right hand features a complex melodic line with many beamed sixteenth and thirty-second notes, often in triplets. The left hand provides a steady accompaniment of eighth notes. A mezzo-forte (mf) dynamic marking is present in measure 74.

76

p

This system contains measures 76 through 79. The right hand continues with intricate melodic patterns. The left hand accompaniment remains consistent. A piano (p) dynamic marking is indicated in measure 78.

80

This system contains measures 80 through 83. The musical texture continues with the right hand's melodic focus and the left hand's accompaniment.

84

This system contains measures 84 through 87. The right hand part features a series of ascending and descending melodic lines, some with grace notes. The left hand accompaniment consists of eighth notes. Brackets are used at the bottom of the system to group measures 84-85 and 86-87.

8

88

8^{va}-

p

This system contains measures 88 through 91. It features a grand staff with a piano (p) dynamic marking. A long slur spans across measures 88 and 89. The right hand plays a melodic line with eighth notes, while the left hand provides a harmonic accompaniment. A dashed line labeled 8^{va}- indicates an octave transposition for the right hand.

92

(8^{va})-

etc.

This system contains measures 92 through 95. The right hand continues the melodic pattern with eighth notes, marked with accents. The left hand has rests. A dashed line labeled (8^{va})- indicates an octave transposition. The system concludes with the word "etc." and a bracketed line.

96

(8^{va})-

rit.

niente

8^{va}

This system contains measures 96 through 99. It includes a *rit.* (ritardando) marking and a triplet of eighth notes in measure 98. The right hand plays a melodic line, and the left hand has rests. A dashed line labeled (8^{va})- indicates an octave transposition. The system ends with a double bar line, a key signature change to one sharp (F#), and the word "niente" above the right hand staff, with an 8^{va} marking below it.

Spring Dawn

春 曉

Written for Piano & Rainstick

Composed by Joannie Ing

Joannie.Ing@gmail.com

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Inspired by Chinese poetry in the T'ang Dynasty (618-906)...

(←read from right to left; vertically↓)

花	huā	夜	yè	處	chù	春	chūn	春	Chūn
落	luò	來	lái	處	chù	眠	mián	曉	Xiǎo
知	zhī	風	fēng	聞	wén	不	bù		
多	duō	雨	yǔ	啼	tí	覺	jué	孟	Mèng
少	shǎo	聲	shēng	鳥	niǎo	曉	xiǎo	浩	Hào
?		,		,		,		然	Rán

Spring Dawn

Sleeping in spring oblivious to dawn
 everywhere I hear birds
 after the wind and rain last night
 I wonder how many petals fell¹

Poet Meng Hao-Jan (689-740)

1. Meng Hao-Jan, "Spring Dawn" from *Poems of the Masters: China's Classic Anthology of T'ang and Sung Dynasty Verse*, Trans. by Red Pine (United States: Copper Canyon Press, 2003), 9.

Spring Dawn

J. Ing

R = Rainstick; circa 5-6 seconds

Composer Notes: This entire piece uses a pentatonic scale with only black notes on the piano.

Moderately animated

15^{ma}----- 8^{va}-----

ff (Gliss on black notes only) (chirping, like birds) *p* (gently, as petals fall)

con pedal 8^{vb}-1

5 *Brightly*

R *mf*

11 *repeat ad libitum*

pp

18

pp

2

26

Measures 26-33 of a musical score. The left hand (bass clef) plays a steady eighth-note accompaniment in D major. The right hand (treble clef) plays a melodic line with a long slur spanning measures 26-33. The dynamics are marked *p* (piano) at the end of the system.

34

Measures 34-41 of a musical score. The left hand (bass clef) continues the eighth-note accompaniment. The right hand (treble clef) continues the melodic line with a long slur. The dynamics are marked *mp* (mezzo-piano) at the end of the system.

42

Measures 42-49 of a musical score. The left hand (bass clef) continues the eighth-note accompaniment. The right hand (treble clef) continues the melodic line with a long slur. The dynamics are marked *mf* (mezzo-forte) at the end of the system.

50

Measures 50-57 of a musical score. The left hand (bass clef) continues the eighth-note accompaniment. The right hand (treble clef) continues the melodic line with a long slur. The dynamics are marked *f* (forte) at the end of the system.

58

rit. *a tempo* mm. 63 & 64: repeat ad libitum *p*

66

p *mp*

70

accel. *rit.* *a tempo* (Playful, like children dancing) *f*

76

ritenuto *a tempo* *p*

4

83

RH → LH: use as many as needed for smooth transition

p

Measure 87-93: play tones at performer's leisure. Exact placement of RH and LH notes in relation to each other not necessarily in strict time: the aim is to create an ethereal texture suggestive of the sunrise.

87

8va *8va*

91

8va *8va* *8va* *15ma* *15ma* *15ma*

8vb *8vb* *8vb* *8vb*

94

ff *Glissando* *pp* *R* *mp* *mf*

8vb *8vb* *8vb* *8vb*

ped *ped* *ped* *ped*

Wistfully

102

accel. *a tempo*

108

p *mf*

115

pp *mf*

8va -----

122

accel.

Lightly, like raindrops

128

p

* mm. 128-161 in 2/4 time: performed completely at performer's leisure.
Composer's intention is to focus on the texture: steady raindrop effect in RH
complements free-falling notes in LH (not necessarily in strict time)

mp

140

151

** Eighth-note sequence C#, D#, F#, G#, A#
may be repeated at performer's leisure
until comfortable transition to next bar

8vb

162

f

rit.

a tempo

mp

Tea Tea Tea Tea Tea Tea

168

f

p

Maestoso e Allargando

8^{va} -

174

f



179

8^{va} -

Pea

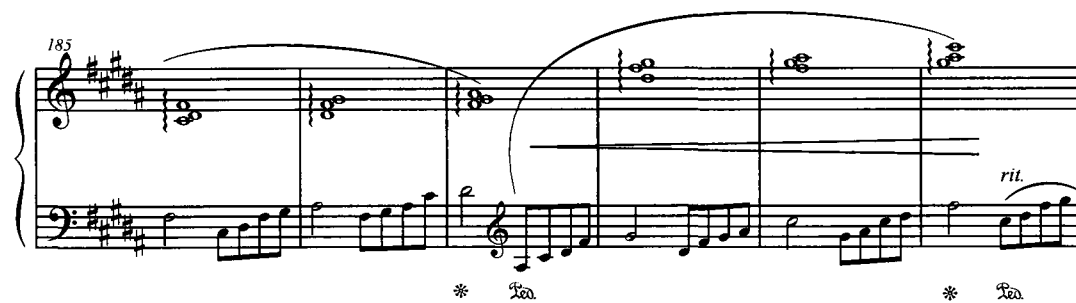


185

rit.

* Pea

* Pea



15^{ma} -

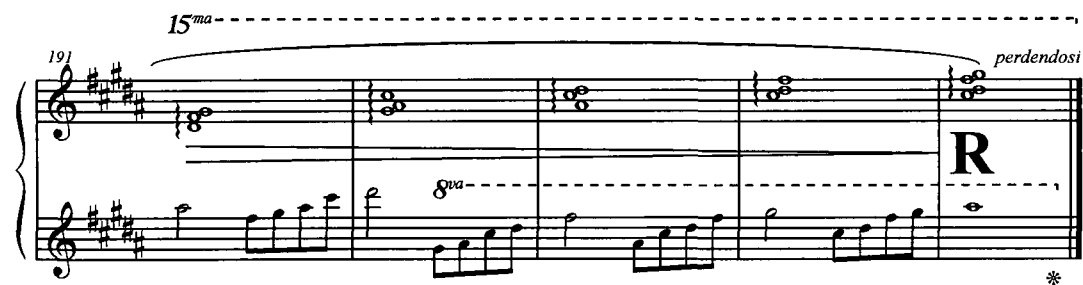
191

perdendosi

R

8^{va} -

*



Drinking Alone by Moonlight

月下獨酌

(inspired by the Chinese poem by Li Bai)

Written for Piano

Composed by Joannie Ing

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Drinking Alone by Moonlight

A Chinese sonnet by
Poet Li Bai (701-762)
from the T'ang Dynasty (618-906)

Among the flowers from a pot of wine
I drink alone beneath the bright moonshine.
I raise my cup to invite the moon, who blends
Her light with my shadow and we're three friends.
The moon does not know how to drink her share;
In vain my shadow follows me here and there.
Together with them for the time I stay
And make merry before spring's spend away.
I sing the moon to linger with my song;
My shadow disperses as I dance along.
Sober, we three remain cheerful and gay;
Drunken, we part and each goes his way.
Our friendship will outshine all earthly love;
Next time we'll meet beyond the stars above.¹

月下獨酌 {李白}

花間一壺酒
獨酌無相親
舉杯邀明月
對影成三人
月既不解飲
影徒隨我身
暫伴月將影
行樂須及春
我歌月徘徊
我舞影零亂
醒時同交歡
醉後各分散
永結無情遊
相期邈雲漢

1. See Bibliography for translation details.

Drinking Alone by Moonlight

J. Ing

Freely, with a feisty spirit

8va -

mp *mf*

, Dreamily

con pedal

mp

2

Freely

10 *mf* *f* *rit.*

13 *a tempo* *mf*

senza pedal con pedal

17

21 *p* *accel.* *rit.*

Senza misura

25

This system contains measures 25, 26, and 27. The music is written for piano in a grand staff. Measures 25 and 26 are marked 'Senza misura' (ad libitum). Each measure features a rapid ascending scale in the right hand, starting from a middle C and reaching the G above the staff. The left hand plays a corresponding ascending scale, starting from a C two octaves below middle C and reaching the G below the staff. The scales are marked with slurs and have a fermata over the final note in each measure. Measure 27 continues the pattern with a similar ascending scale, also marked with a fermata.

28

This system contains measures 28 and 29. Measure 28 continues the rapid ascending scale pattern from the previous system, marked with a fermata. Measure 29 features a similar ascending scale in the right hand, but the left hand plays a descending scale, starting from a G below the staff and ending on a C two octaves below middle C. The measure is marked with a fermata. The system concludes with a double bar line and a 4/4 time signature.

Dreamily; with an increased sense of urgency and passion

30

This system contains measures 30, 31, 32, and 33. The music is written for piano in a grand staff. Measures 30 and 31 are marked 'Dreamily; with an increased sense of urgency and passion'. The right hand plays a rapid ascending scale, starting from a middle C and reaching the G above the staff. The left hand plays a corresponding ascending scale, starting from a C two octaves below middle C and reaching the G below the staff. The scales are marked with slurs and have a fermata over the final note in each measure. Measures 32 and 33 continue the pattern with similar ascending scales, also marked with a fermata. The system concludes with a double bar line and a 4/4 time signature.

con pedal

4

Measures 34-36 of a piano piece. The music is in 12/8 time. Measure 34 starts with a treble clef and a key signature of one flat. The right hand plays a rapid sixteenth-note pattern, while the left hand plays a slower eighth-note pattern. Dynamic markings *mp*, *mf*, and *f* are placed below the right hand staff, each with a hairpin indicating a crescendo or decrescendo. The piece concludes with a double bar line at the end of measure 36.

Measures 37-39 of a piano piece. Measure 37 begins with a treble clef, a key signature of one flat, and a *tr* (trill) marking. The right hand plays a rapid sixteenth-note pattern. The left hand has a whole rest. Measure 38 features an *accel.* (accelerando) marking. Measure 39 features an *a tempo* marking. The piece concludes with a double bar line at the end of measure 39.

Measures 40-41 of a piano piece. Measure 40 starts with a treble clef and a key signature of one flat. The right hand plays a rapid sixteenth-note pattern, and the left hand plays a slower eighth-note pattern. Dynamic markings *p* and *mp* are placed below the right and left hand staves, respectively. Measure 41 continues the patterns. The piece concludes with a double bar line at the end of measure 41.

Measures 42-44 of a piano piece. Measure 42 starts with a treble clef and a key signature of one flat. The right hand plays a rapid sixteenth-note pattern, and the left hand plays a slower eighth-note pattern. Dynamic markings *p* and *mf* are placed below the right and left hand staves, respectively. Measure 43 continues the patterns. Measure 44 features a *8vb* (octave below) marking with a dashed line indicating the transposition. The piece concludes with a double bar line at the end of measure 44.

44 *rit.* *a tempo*

mp

senza pedal

47

mf

con pedal

50 *2nd Time to Coda*

2nd Time to Coda

54 *D.S. al Coda* \oplus *Coda*

D.S. al Coda \oplus *Coda*

6

58 *accel.* *rit.*

Measures 58-61: Treble and bass staves. Measure 58 has a treble staff with triplets of eighth notes and a bass staff with quarter notes. Measure 59 has a treble staff with triplets of eighth notes and a bass staff with quarter notes. Measure 60 has a treble staff with triplets of eighth notes and a bass staff with quarter notes. Measure 61 has a treble staff with eighth notes and a bass staff with quarter notes. The key signature is three sharps (F#, C#, G#) and the time signature is 4/4.

Dreamily, with intense passion and desire

62 *mp*

Measures 62-64: Treble and bass staves. Measure 62 has a treble staff with eighth notes and a bass staff with quarter notes. Measure 63 has a treble staff with eighth notes and a bass staff with quarter notes. Measure 64 has a treble staff with eighth notes and a bass staff with quarter notes. The key signature is three sharps (F#, C#, G#) and the time signature is 4/4.

65 *mf* *f* *mf* *rit.* *a tempo* *senza pedal*

Measures 65-67: Treble and bass staves. Measure 65 has a treble staff with eighth notes and a bass staff with quarter notes. Measure 66 has a treble staff with eighth notes and a bass staff with quarter notes. Measure 67 has a treble staff with eighth notes and a bass staff with quarter notes. The key signature is three sharps (F#, C#, G#) and the time signature is 4/4.

68 *mp*

Measures 68-70: Treble and bass staves. Measure 68 has a treble staff with eighth notes and a bass staff with quarter notes. Measure 69 has a treble staff with eighth notes and a bass staff with quarter notes. Measure 70 has a treble staff with eighth notes and a bass staff with quarter notes. The key signature is three sharps (F#, C#, G#) and the time signature is 4/4.

71

mf *p*

74

f

77

p *f*

con pedal

80

Animated and light

mf *mp*

senza pedal etc.

8

83

8^{va}

86

(8^{va})

rit.

This musical score is for piano and consists of two systems. The first system contains measures 83 to 85, and the second system contains measures 86 to 89. The key signature is three sharps (F#, C#, G#). The first system features a treble staff with a melodic line and a bass staff with a rhythmic accompaniment. A dashed line with the marking '8^{va}' indicates an octave transposition for the right hand starting in measure 84. The second system continues the melodic and rhythmic patterns. A dashed line with the marking '(8^{va})' indicates an octave transposition for the right hand starting in measure 87. The piece concludes in measure 89 with a final chord in the right hand and a sustained note in the left hand, marked with a 'rit.' (ritardando) instruction.

Without music, life would be a mistake.

-- Friedrich Nietzsche, German philosopher (1844 - 1900)

Chapter 4: Application & Practice ~ The *Value* of Music, Poetry and Aesthetics

In Chapter 1, there was a discussion defining what music, poetry, and aesthetics entailed, and thus, it becomes natural to explore the practical implications of those findings. The question to ask now is not *what is*, but rather, *what is the value* of music, of poetry, of aesthetics and the arts in general? *What is the value* of the artist, and her role in society? What are some factors that influence the arts, and possibly even endanger and confuse their relevance to the public? What are the different artist types, and how does my music fit into that context? What is the ‘serious’ artist? What is ‘good’ versus ‘bad’ art? How might one listen to classical and classical contemporary music in order to be enriched by the experience? What is the *value* of *classical* and *classical contemporary* music in today’s society? How might one respond to this type of music? And why on earth is the title of this thesis “Addicted to Beauty”? These questions will be explored and answered here.

To objectively define *the value* of music is no easy task, as it appears much of its appeal has to do with a mystical experience that can’t quite be put into words – but that is *precisely* the beauty of the art. Often, one might say that music is lovely and beautiful without knowing consciously or being able to describe precisely *why* this is

so: one is able to understand with the *heart* if not with the *mind*. Thus, music is *valuable* as an independent and *abstract art*:

Music seems to be a paradise essentially unrelated to the world we live our ordinary lives in, deriving its import and sustenance from itself alone; and its effects on us appear unaccountable or out of all proportion to their cause and object. That, at least, is how music has commonly been seen by those who find its value theoretically problematic and its capacity to enrapture us mysterious.¹

Another point to note on the aesthetic value of music is its ability to bring diverse things together. Music is valuable in exemplifying the unification of diverse materials and the harmonious reconciliation of multiplicity within a unity, which is a so-called ‘unity in diversity’ or ‘organic unity.’² Within a musical piece, there are so many things that happen melodically, harmonically, structurally, etc. and yet, the form unites all of these elements into a coherent whole. In music, abstract concepts are embodied – beauty, gracefulness, wit, imagination and mastery – and these ‘paradigms of perfection’ only add to its overall aesthetic potential and value.³

Music as an abstract art is important and valuable to our existence because of its unique capacity to free us from our normal perspectives such that we might experience and see the world differently. Music allows the heart and emotions to do the ‘thinking’ when this is often overruled by the mind – this is precisely the key to its artistic potential:

There is the possibility of explaining the value of artistic experience in general...or of abstract art in particular... by reference to the tranquility that

1. Malcolm Budd, *Values of Art: Pictures, Poetry, and Music* (London, England; New York: PenguinBooks, 1996), 126.

2. *Ibid.*, 171.

3. *Ibid.*

results from its freeing us from undesirable or painful features of our normal experience of the world.⁴

This characteristic – that there is an *infinite* capacity in a *mysterious* and *indefinable* artistic potential – is found not only in music, but extensively throughout the arts.

Given the lack of ... theory capable of explaining the power of abstract music to affect people so deeply, it might appear that music's power must remain mysterious. This is true in so far as the puzzlement is psychological, although, it should be noted, it is not a peculiarity of music, but applies to poetry, architecture, painting, and the other art forms, that the science of psychology is unable to explain the strength and depth of the effects the art is capable of producing.⁵

With that in mind, consider the art of poetry: it is not in the *content matter* of the poem, but the *uniqueness of the experience* that renders the poem of *value*. After all,

...it is never the sole object of poetry as poetry to convey a message; rather, the function of a poem as poetry is that it in itself should be experienced, which is to say that its function is to provide an experience that cannot be fully characterized independently of the poem itself.⁶

In poetry, the nature of this experience is found in its form – that is, its uniquely chosen arrangement of words – such that the story, concept, or idea expressed unfolds in a particular manner and provides a particular experience:

A poem presents thoughts in a certain manner by embodying these thoughts in an arrangement of words. The value of a poem as a poem does not consist in the significance of the thoughts it expresses...but what matters in poetry is the imaginative experience you undergo in reading the poem; and it is constitutive

4. Ibid, 126.

5. Ibid., 158.

6. Ibid., 84.

of this imaginative experience that it consists in an awareness of the words as arranged in the poem.⁷

Therefore, a *combination* of the arts – music and poetry – is a powerful artistic means with important implications for the *beautiful*. Budd describes the *beautiful* to be ‘intrinsically pleasurable in virtue of the fact that its form encourages the imagination and understanding to engage in free, harmonious play’⁸ and thus *beauty* is ‘its suitability to provide disinterested pleasure in its form.’⁹ The note about ‘disinterested pleasure’ relates back to Kant (see chapter 1.6), and essentially has to do with art providing an inherent pleasure and delight without consciously doing so – it simply *is* beautiful without actively trying to be. Thus, music inspired by poetry offers a simultaneous but different experience of the same concept and as a result, the *beautiful* is increased exponentially such that the experience becomes all the more intensified, meaningful and therefore valuable.

4.1 The Artist in Society and Why She is Becoming an Endangered Species

Who is the artist, and what is her role – her *value* -- to society? What does she offer that is worth *preserving*? Cézanne says the artist, whether she is a poet or a painter, a musician or a potter, “gives shape to sensations and perceptions”¹⁰ lingering in the unconscious: in other words, the artist uses her craft to uncover deeply hidden philosophical concepts by providing a physical form for them to embody. Read says

7. Ibid., 83.

8. Ibid., 34.

9. Ibid., 35.

10. Sir Herbert Edward Read, *Art and alienation: the role of the artist in society* (New York: Horizon Press, 1967), 25.

the artist is the revolutionary, one who is courageous enough to offer a different and unique perspective and vision of the reality as she sees fit:

Art, on the other hand, is eternally disturbing; permanently revolutionary. It is so because the artist, in the degree of his greatness, always confronts the unknown, and what he brings back from that confrontation is a novelty, a new symbol, a new vision of life; the outer image of inward things.¹¹

In the context to my piano music, the artist is one who seeks to create something implicitly *beautiful* particularly in an age of the explicitly *ugly*: the music does not tell one what to think, but allows one to think for oneself. Hegel writes that the true function of art is “to bring to consciousness the highest interests of the mind”¹² and he explains this is possible because “the imagination *creates*...the external forms of what exists,”¹³ which echoes sentiments of Cézanne. The problem is that the potential of *the imagination* is often overlooked and undervalued in today’s society.

Quoting prominent 19th-century Swiss historian of art and culture Jacob Burckhardt:

The arts are a faculty of man, a power and a creation. Imagination, their vital, central impulse, has at all times been regarded as divine...To give tangible form to that which is inward, to represent it in such a way that we see it as the outward image of inward things – that is a most rare power. To re-create the external in external form – that is within the power of many [already].¹⁴

Though the capacity for greatness through the imagination is very much present, the impulse to indulge this potential is often hindered as a result of a fast-paced, technological society, where the importance of art and aesthetics becomes trivialized.

11. Ibid., 24.

12. Ibid.

13. Ibid.

14. Ibid., 20.

The world is full of frustrated artists, or rather, of people whose creative instincts have been frustrated...One of the most tragic injustices of our technological civilization is that the natural sensibility of men which in other ages found an outlet in basic crafts is now completely suppressed, or finds a pathetic outlet in some trivial 'hobby'.¹⁵

What precisely is it about *technology* and *modernization* that threaten the existence of the *artist* – and all her philosophical associations with aesthetics, beauty, and the imagination – in society? As society becomes more and more infiltrated by technology, one's aesthetic judgment becomes substantially distorted:

As culture is popularized, is 'mediated' to the masses, it is...diluted, castrated, de-formed (in the precise sense that the form the artist gave to his work is destroyed in order to comply with the technological demands of the medium...) As a consequence of this 'process of technological rationality' the whole basis of aesthetic judgment is subtly perverted and the pre-technological [art loses] its [initial] power.¹⁶

Furthermore, from Chapter 1, the connection between music and emotional meaning was made evident as well as the fact that the arts – music especially – enliven the senses and intellect in delightful ways. Read argues that technological man has 'no need for feelings' and thus implies that there is no 'need' for 'art.' Read quotes Shelley and asserts that since man is already 'good, great and joyous, beautiful and free', he no longer needs:

To suffer woes which Hope thinks infinite;
To forgive wrongs darker than death or night;
To defy Power, which seems omnipotent;
To love, and bear; to hope till Hope creates
From its own wreck the thing it contemplates.¹⁷

15. Ibid.

16. Ibid., 30.

17. Ibid., 31.

Essentially, Read suggests that divine virtues such as suffering, forgiveness, love and hope become estranged from mankind when technology dilutes the arts because the need for emotional expression and articulation becomes lost in the process. If ‘technological man’ no longer has feelings, then “he does not suffer so how can he forgive; he does not love and therefore has no need to hope.”¹⁸ Read’s ideas may seem somewhat outrageous at first glance, but there is certainly some truth to his reckoning. Perhaps instead of saying that ‘technological man has no need for feeling’, the sentiment could be made more accurate by stating that ‘technological man’ becomes more and more *de-sensitized* to his inherent feelings that love, hope, faith, power, forgiveness, etc. become distant and esoteric concepts and as a result, the need to express them is tragically lost in the confusion. ‘Technological man’ no longer contemplates; after all, science and technology render answers and conveniences readily available at the push of a button. Thus, the process of seeking, suffering, persevering and enduring for a greater cause becomes ‘unnecessary.’ It is difficult to explain the role and function of the artist in society if one does not value the sense of wonderment and curiosity; the potential of the imagination; and if one is content with merely “replacing a magical theatre with a scientific one, a childish theatre with an adult one.”¹⁹ Furthermore, to “deprive the artist of magic and

18. Ibid.

19. Ibid., 32.

empathy is to deprive him of the essential processes of the creative or imaginative activity that have characterized art from Homer...to Brecht.”²⁰

My piano music is not ‘revolutionary’ by any artistic means nor does it seek to disrupt the social order. It does, however, invite one to contemplate its aesthetic value and experience the raw emotion on display in an earnest attempt to ‘musicalize’ the poetry from which it was inspired.

4.2 Artistic Types

In discussing the role of the artist, it also becomes necessary to distinguish between artist *types*. According to Meyer, there are four different types of artist, and they are 1) the *creative* artist, who seeks to preserve tradition, but also to deviate within it and to create anew; 2) the *traditional* artist, who understands the relationship of norm to deviants and who works within this relationship; 3) the *academic* artist, who views norms as ends in themselves and seeks to not only to codify them but also their deviations such that it gives status to the norms; and 4) the *avant-garde* artist, who will push traditional modes of deviation to the extreme for their own sake – as a result, tradition is destroyed through such exaggeration, sarcasm and even parody.²¹

Meyer’s artist designations help to place my classical contemporary piano music into context. I would consider myself mostly a *creative* artist, as my work reflects traditional methodologies in the classical realm but also operates outside of these conventions at times as well. However, with 21st-century contemporary *avant-*

20. Ibid.

21. Meyer, *Emotion and Meaning in Music*, 71.

garde artists pushing the fringe on what the ‘norm’ entails, one could also make the argument that my music sounds perhaps ‘traditional’ to some who hear it. Therefore, it is difficult to pinpoint objectively what style and genre an artist falls into precisely; however, the awareness of these various types can be useful knowledge to better examine characteristics in the work and place it into relation to other music.

4.3 The ‘Serious’ Artist and Distinguishing ‘Good’ versus ‘Bad’ Art/Music

In an essay titled ‘The Serious Artist’, American expatriate poet, critic and intellectual Ezra Pound (1885-1972) likens the ‘serious’ artist to a notable *physician*: the standard that Pound applies to their roles and responsibilities in society are surprisingly similar as both play integral roles in the community as healers of metaphysical and physical ailments respectively. Pound also describes the arts as a ‘science’ with ‘man’ as its subject matter: “The arts, literature, poesy, are a science, just as chemistry is a science. Their subject is man, mankind, and the individual. The subject of chemistry is matter considered as to its composition.”²² In other words, Pound likens *life itself* to a grand art form obliging further contemplation.

What precisely do the arts suggest about *us* and about our *lives*? Pound suggests that art shows mankind how we may be *fundamentally similar yet different* from one another. It is one key method to expressing one’s individuality:

From the arts we learn that man is whimsical, that one man differs from another. That men differ among themselves as leaves differ upon trees. That they do not resemble each other as do buttons cut by machine.

22. Ezra Pound, *The Literary Essays of Ezra Pound* (New York: New Directions, 1968), 42.

From the arts also we learn in what ways man resembles and in what way he differs from certain other animals...We learn that all men do not desire the same things and that it would therefore be inequitable to give to all men two acres and a cow.²³

In fine arts such as music and poetry, there is an infinite capacity for individuality, and the value of this is not only for one to *learn about* and *express oneself* but it also reveals how we *differ* from one another. Furthermore, according to Pound, another important function and *value* of the arts is that they are an indication of man's state and his ethics: "I have said that the arts give us our best data for determining what sort of creature man is. As our treatment of man must be determined by our knowledge or conception of what man is, the arts provide data for ethics."²⁴

The state of ethics – a philosophical branch dealing with morality – is important in the arts in relation to determining what is *good* and *bad* art. In ethics, where *truth* is the highest ideal, 'bad' art is work that is inaccurate and false – and for Pound, the creation of such is a criminal offense worthy of punishment:

If an artist falsifies his report as to the nature of man, as to his own nature, as to the nature of his ideal of the perfect, as to the nature of his ideal of this, that or the other, of god, if god exist, of the life force, of the nature of good and evil, if good and evil exist, of the force with which he believes or disbelieves this, that or the other, of the degree in which he suffers or is made glad; if the artist falsifies his reports on these matters or on any other matter in order that he may conform to the taste of his time, to the properties of a sovereign, to the conveniences of a preconceived code of ethics, then that artist lies. If he lies out of deliberate will to lie, if he lies out of carelessness, out of laziness, out of cowardice, out of any sort of negligence whatsoever, he nevertheless lies and he should be punished or despised in proportion to the seriousness of his offence.²⁵

23. Ibid., 42.

24. Ibid., 46.

25. Ibid., 43-4.

In other words, the artist who compromises the integrity of her work creates *bad* art which debases those who put forth the effort and sincerity to create *good* art.

According to Pound, ‘good’ art has to do with virtue and morality when he states:

Yet it takes a deal of talking to convince a layman that bad art is ‘immoral’. And that good art...is wholly a thing of virtue. Purely and simply that good art can NOT be immoral. By good art I mean art that bears true witness, I mean that the art is most precise.²⁶

When Pound suggests that art is to be ‘most precise’, it means that the art is *genuine* to the *intended artistic vision*: in other words, it does not compromise itself in order to appease an audience or cater to a particular popularity but that it remains true to itself and thus becomes ‘wholly a thing of virtue’ (see quote above). A well-known characteristic of ‘good art’ is that it seeks to be *beautiful*, and beauty, according to Pound, is a non-negotiable virtue intrinsic to the art form, as he writes:

Beauty in art reminds one of what is worth while. I am not now speaking of shams. I mean beauty, not slither, not sentimentalizing about beauty, not telling people that beauty is the proper and respectable thing. I mean beauty. You don’t argue about an April wind, you feel bucked up when you meet it. You feel bucked up when you come on a swift moving through in Plato or on a fine line in a statue.²⁷

In differentiating ‘good’ and ‘bad’ *art*, it is appropriate to discuss ‘good’ and ‘bad’ *music*. According to American sociologist Simon Frith in his text *Bad Music: The Music We Love to Hate*, three common qualities of ‘bad’ music are 1) it is *inauthentic* (similar to Pound’s point); 2) it is in *bad taste*, or that which is *kitsch*, and

26. Ibid., 44.

27. Ibid., 45.

3) it is *stupid* and fails to convey anything intelligible or worthy. Some examples include a) music by *incompetent* musicians/producers; b) music made by people who are not musicians but merely *trying to be trendy* such as actors/actresses recording music in the latest style; c) music made with *novelty gimmicks* and *fake charm*; and d) music that *relies on false sentiment*, such as those terrible, sappy radio pop songs made to sell. He argues that:

The marking off of some tracks and genres and artists as ‘bad’ is a necessary part of popular music pleasure; it is a way we establish our place in various music worlds. And ‘bad’ is a key word here because it suggests that aesthetic and ethical judgments are tied together...: not to like a record is not just a matter of taste; it is also a matter of argument, and argument that matters.²⁸

In other words, distinguishing ‘bad’ music is important in order to appreciate and mark what *good* music is. By extension of Frith’s remarks, one would infer that *good* music would be something that 1) is authentic, 2) is in good taste, and 3) communicates something worthy and intelligible.

With regard to the ‘serious’ versus the ‘unserious’ artist, Pound says that there are certainly many more of the second type. While it may be easy to condemn a ‘bad’ artist, it is much more difficult to distinguish between the ‘serious’ and ‘unserious’ artist because the ‘unserious’ will obviously attempt to pass himself off as the ‘serious’ for the sake of self-interest:

Among thinking and sentient people the bad artist is contemned as we would contemn a negligent physician ... In the fog and the outer darkness no measures are taken to distinguish between the serious and the unserious artist. The unserious artist being the commoner brand and outnumbering the serious variety, and it being to the temporary and apparent advantage of the false artist

28. Simon Frith, *Bad Music: The Music We Love to Hate* (New York: Routledge, 2004), 28.

to gain the rewards proper to the serious artist, it is natural that the unserious artist should do all in his power to obfuscate the lines of demarcation.²⁹

In consideration of Pound's characterization of the 'serious' artist, I have created a list of five traits I believe the *serious* artist possesses. The *serious* artist is:

- 1) **passionate**: there is an unquestionable sense of urgency and compulsion to compose, to create, to perform, and to express that which is in the soul
- 2) **committed**: there is an undying dedication and unconditional pledge towards the perfection of the art; one is willing to make any necessary sacrifices for its completion
- 3) **truthful and genuine**: there is unquestionable integrity in the effort as evident in the work; it is not false nor tries to present false ideas for self-gain
- 4) **competent**: the artist/creator herself is skilled in the craft, both in *knowledge* and *technique* of the art, and continually does everything in her power to become skilled in the craft for the highest level of achievement in the art (e.g. a singer who sings in tune)
- 5) **joyful in the art itself**: the greatest reward is in the art itself; any other gain is supplementary – a bonus -- to the added delight of creation and/or performance

By extension to such a definition, the *unserious* artist is one who (is)/whose:

- 1) **indifferent**: to succeed or not succeed in the art is irrelevant
- 2) **divided**: works at it inconsistently and without dedication
- 3) **lacks integrity**: is insincere, willing to compromise virtue for self-gain
- 4) possibly somewhat competent but most likely **incompetent**: both in knowledge and in skill, he/she most notably lacks the humility and discernment to know the difference (e.g. a singer who doesn't sing in tune and thinks he/she is amazing)
- 5) **strongest motivation for artistic creation is not the art itself**: it could be economic gain, fame, etc. The moment that the art/music one makes becomes a 'job' is when the artistry of the work is potentially compromised.

29. Ibid., 47-8.

4.4 Why Classical – and Classical Contemporary – Music Matters

I generally describe my piano music from poetry to be ‘classical contemporary music’ – that is, contemporary music composed adhering much to a well-known, classical tradition. What is the *value* of classical and classical contemporary music in today’s society? The fact that one even asks such a question reveals something about the society we dwell in – that such music is sadly underappreciated in a modern, fast-paced world. One of the reasons that many fail to see the inherent value of this music has to do with a general neglect and unwillingness to *listen deeply* to a type of music that demands one’s fullest attention:

In a world that moves at digital speed, a world increasingly crowded by people, ideas, agendas, a maelstrom of technological change, ecological danger, and cultural conflicts that are often virulent even when they manage, ever more narrowly, to avoid violence, the ability to *listen deeply*, to open the labyrinths of the ear and be sounded out by the voices that address us, may be the very ability many people are most lacking in...³⁰

and therefore cannot even begin to appreciate or fathom its *value*. One must not only *listen deeply*, but *listen into* the music in order to truly explore and hear its essence:

The term *classical music* refers to a specific body of nontheatrical music produced since the eighteenth century with a single aim in view: to be listened to....Or perhaps we should say to be listened *into*. All music trains the ear to hear it properly, but classical music trains the ear to hear with a peculiar acuity. It wants to be explored, not just heard. It ‘trains’ the ear in the sense of pointing, seeking: it trains both the body’s ear and the mind’s to hearken, to attend closely, to listen deeply, as one wants to listen to something not to be missed: a secret disclosed, a voice that enchants or warns or soothes or understands, a faint echo of the music traditionally said to hold the world itself together in a kind of harmony...This kind of listening is done not with the ear but with the whole person.³¹

30. Lawrence Kramer, *Why Classical Music Still Matters* (University of California Press, 2007), 12.

31. *Ibid.*, 11.

Listening to this type of music passively will simply not do, for “this sort of listening involves both focused attention and active involvement. Its attention is a form of attending; it is not just a hearing but a *hearkening*.”³² Furthermore, it is a sort of music that one *grows still for*:

People know that classical music is supposed to be listened to in a certain way, with a certain ritualized respect, quietly, on one’s best behaviour. More ‘popular’ types of music are more attuned to movement; they are something one moves to, not something one *grows still for*.³³

In a fast-paced society that seems to always be on-the-go, that demands instant-messaging, instant answers and instant gratification, the notion of *stillness* is a foreign concept to many and thus the ability to appreciate this music becomes difficult.

Upon making the conscious effort to give one’s fullest and undivided attention to a music one must *listen deeply*, *listen into*, and *grow still for*, the inevitable enrichment gained from the experience can scarce be put into words. Here are but a few of the ways that classical and classical contemporary music may be valuable and transformational to a keen and active listener:

- 1) Classical music exemplifies historically significant themes, values and virtues that have the potential to enlighten and relieve us. Kramer writes:

Music may sometimes offer us needed relief from life’s burdens, but it serves us better, I believe, when it offers us insight, intuition, and empathy. My topics are memory, ecstasy, identity, and war; they are suffering and longing, solitude and community, love and death. I write about these things through classical music...These topics are not as

32. Ibid., 19.

33. Ibid., 210.

abstractions or generic themes but as concrete, historically specific matters of importance that find some of their many voices in this music.³⁴

In doing so, what makes classical music exceptionally valuable is the potential for one to still *believe* in *ideals* in life amidst the conditions of contemporary society:

Yet as long as people are susceptible to the ideal of a free, rich subjectivity, as long as they feel that this subjectivity has a dimension of depth that, plumbed, can yield both pleasure and knowledge, the music will retain the power to move and enlighten them. It may even retain the power to frighten and disturb, to speak to and for the parts of our subjectivity we cannot hope to command or master...The ideas behind this music still have life in them, a life by turns surprising, reassuring, nostalgic and uncanny.³⁵

2) Classical music is valuable because it is heard and developed through the *inner self*, which is what renders each one of us unique as individuals:

Classical music...flourished along with the political and philosophical 'discovery' that human beings are grounded in deep inner selves, that each of us has a private core of being to call our own. This inner person is important in a host of ways. It is as that person that I have mental freedom, political liberty and human rights. It is the inner self that guarantees our uniqueness to each of us; it is the basis of identity in the modern world. Most important for present purposes, when we listen intently to music, it is the inner self that hears.³⁶

Furthermore, this becomes valuable as the experience offers a sense of *self-reflectiveness* through the natural development of *critical thinking* upon listening:

34. Ibid., 9.

35. Ibid., 21-2.

36. Ibid., 19.

Why does classical music still matter?...One answer would be that high-cultural products do more with their self-reflectiveness than the popular culture products tend to do. They incorporate a thoughtful self-distancing from their own fantasies, which are nonetheless offered without more irony than they can bear. This distancing puts the fantasy-engine of these works at a certain remove. We can partake of the fantasy, all right, but we are also offered the opportunity to think about what it means and even to be critical of it, and of ourselves.³⁷

- 3) Classical music is valuable for its infinite dramatic possibilities: it has been described as ‘drama without the stage or actors’.³⁸ One might even say that before cinema was invented, classical music was ‘acoustic cinema.’³⁹ This makes classical music of value because it presents a zone in which fiction and reality can intermingle for surprising and delightful consequences:

Music is one of the media in which it is imagined and also one of the means by which it is created. What occurs in the zone is imaginary, but the zone and its effects are real. Classical music not only opens this zone of intermingling but also constantly enlarges and deepens it, maps it and explores it in intricate and surprising detail, finds in it not only a destination but also a point of departure.⁴⁰

- 4) Classical music is valuable for the overwhelming sense of *resolve* that it can provide through its intricate complexities of sound and sonority. Kramer speaks from personal experience about a having difficult time in his life at one point, and encountering Beethoven’s *String Quartet # 12 in E-flat, Op. 127* performed by the Julliard String Quartet. He writes,

37. Ibid., 99.

38. Ibid., 31.

39. Ibid.

40. Ibid., 142.

I had come to the concert troubled in mind, lonely, more than a little angry and defensive, beset by unresolved difficulties in romance and friendship. I left feeling reconciled with the prospects of success and failure in resolving my problems...What I had heard, in those opening bars especially, was the ability of strong, almost violent depth of feeling to change in a moment to the most rapturous tenderness. The contrast between the two was not a gulf but a span across which one could freely move. I heard all this in the music; I still do.⁴¹

Thus, when life falls short of our expectations, this sort of music in particular can fill a startling emotional void and satisfy one's inner discontent:

...the emotional trust so many of us place so readily in music of all kinds shows their continuing influence, as well as the continued vitality of the music that nourished them. Our times may be telling us that subjectivity itself is old-fashioned, but perhaps that just makes us hunger for it more. The signs of the times suggest as much. Classical music can help fill our emotional needs; all we have to do is let it.⁴²

- 5) Finally, classical music is valuable in the unique manner that it *mimics life* like no other music does. The vibrating tone of a string – whether a violin or piano – is a wonderful mystery that serves as a metaphor for life as all living things move and vibrate in their own special way:

Underlying all the possibilities of spirit and mechanism at the piano was what might be called the romance of the tone: the pure sound of a vibrating string. It was common during much of the nineteenth century to think of tone as incipient music, both in itself and as an analogue to the sensitive vibration of human nerves. Tone felt like the vibration of human nerves. Tone felt like the vibratory presence of life and sensibility.⁴³

Moreover, not only does classical and classical contemporary music mimic life itself, it is valuable in adding a much-needed *new dimension to life* amidst

41. Ibid., 72-3.

42. Ibid., 141.

43. Ibid., 144.

the everyday monotony of ordinary things. Upon hearing a solo violin sonata from a busker at a subway station, Kramer writes:

This is the discovery that music attentively heard can become the performance of inner coherence. It can serve as the portal to an inner life understood as possessing a psychological and emotional richness that the ego enjoys and suffers but never fully masters – hence a life not wholly determined by mundane forces and responsibilities.⁴⁴

In sum, the appreciation of classical and classical contemporary music has to do with a genuine interest and effort to listen intently with an open mind to a music that demands much of its listener. Even if one is unfamiliar with the work, the potential to derive something worthwhile from the experience is great because of a mysterious and high aesthetic value in its abstract complexities. American contemporary composer Joshua Fineburg writes that art is not about giving people what they want, but rather, about *giving them something they didn't know they wanted*.⁴⁵ This is particularly valuable to consider in relation to *classical contemporary music* because of the potential to learn and experience new and delightful ways of hearing and seeing through an unfamiliar medium. There is, therefore, a *need* to give classical contemporary music a chance and an earnest heart in listening, because the *potential to discover something great* intrinsic to the work is very real and possible:

But there are so many things we have not seen or heard – an essentially endless supply. Yet we must put up with the discomfiture of travel if we are to discover a new place, if we are to return home with slightly different eyes. If the orchestra only plays what we already know we want to hear, we will

44. Ibid., 224.

45. Joshua Fineburg, *Classical Music, Why Bother?* (New York: Taylor & Francis Group, 2006) 21.

never hear anything new and we will never find a new way to hear the pieces we already love.⁴⁶

4.5 Responses to Classical Contemporary Music

The typical layperson's response to music generally consists of either 1) "It's good; I like it", and 2) "It's bad; I don't like it." While one is certainly entitled to one's liking of a particular work, the problem with these overly simplistic responses is that it fails to acknowledge the quality of work which exists independently of the listener's personal tastes. One can certainly like what is *good*, and one can also like what is *not good*: conversely, one can also dislike what is *good*, and dislike what is *not good*. Furthermore, the two responses neglect to acknowledge the possibility of lacking a defined, informed opinion, possibly because the opinion is not yet formed in its entirety as the work is still resonating in one's unconscious. In light of this, I propose five possibilities instead of the usual two responses, and the first four are as follows:

- 1) It's *good*, and I like/agree with it.
- 2) It's *good* and I don't like/agree with it.
- 3) It's *not good*, but I enjoy it.
- 4) It's *not good*, and I don't like it.

One important distinction to note in these responses is that the *artistic value* of the work is not dependent upon the *instrumental value* of the work. *Artistic value* has to do with the intrinsic value of the work as tied to the form and the unique experience

46. Ibid., 146.

that the work has to offer, while *instrumental value* is related to one's subjective tastes and the affect of a work based on these preferences. Budd further clarifies:

The effects of the experience of a work of art on an individual (its *individual instrumental value*) or on people in general (its *overall instrumental value*) are certainly of great importance; but it is the character of the experience the work offers, in conjunction with the nature of those who undergo it, that determines what these effects are likely to be; and it is not these effects themselves, but the character of the experience, that determines the *artistic value* of the work.⁴⁷

In other words, the *quality* of the work (artistic value) is separated from one's *subjective* tastes (instrumental value).

One common misconception with artistic experiences is to use the term *good* when what one really means is *entertaining*; however, it must be said that *good* things can also be very *entertaining* in themselves though that isn't always the case. The terms *good* and *entertaining* are often used interchangeably, but they are certainly not the same in meaning. Canadian composer Alexina Louie defines the important distinction:

There is a difference between *good* and *entertaining*. I would say a lot of popular music is more *entertaining* than *good*. "Entertaining" has more to do with being flashy, though it can still be musical and well-written as a piece. With "good", however, there is an essence of depth to it: it is profound and the listener is won over by its artistic merit and content matter.⁴⁸

Classical contemporary will not often be described as *entertaining* though it certainly seeks to be *good* music. *Good* thus becomes an objective aesthetics qualifier, and

47. Budd, *Values of Art: Pictures, Poetry, and Music*, 7.

48. Alexina Louie, *Joannie's Interview Notes from a Phone Conversation with Alexina Louie*, Sat. April 5/08, Toronto: 2008, pg. 3.

while it may seem to vary from person to person, its essence remains *timeless* because it measures the *quality* of the artistic work without necessarily catering to specific tastes of the time. To say something is *good* would suggest that it stands alone as excellent, genuine, virtuous, and truthful to its purpose. To say that music is *good* suggests something about its very composition, and that its content, as well as its experience, offers something *worthy*. With the type of music I write, *good* is synonymous with *beauty* – and the *beautiful* simply exists intrinsically in its form without consciously doing so.

There is also a fifth and important valid response to classical contemporary music that many neglect to consider, and this is when the listener thinks, *I don't understand it; and so, I'm not sure if I like it/what to think of it*. There is no need to respond *right away* as the work is still resonating in one's unconscious, and this is important to acknowledge for any listener new to the genre. Please – take your time and think it through. The newness of classical contemporary works – its unfamiliar complexities and surprising sound combinations – can often be overwhelming. Personal reflection and inner contemplation are certainly wise responses to undertake: this can help toward uncovering the artistic value in a genuine attempt to *grasp the meaning* of the work as well as *appreciate it* for what it is communicating.⁴⁹

49. Budd, *Values of Art: Pictures, Poetry, and Music*, 40.

4.6 Closing Thoughts: Explaining the title ‘Addicted to Beauty’

One hopes that the intentions behind the title “Addicted to Beauty” would become obvious at this point, but in case they are not, here is a brief breakdown of the ideology behind it. Let’s proceed by defining the terms. When one thinks of ‘addicted’, one pictures something which causes a person to be “physiologically or psychologically dependent upon it,”⁵⁰ but consider in this case, being ‘addicted’ refers more so to a compulsive and intense preoccupation with something. The term ‘addicted’ was chosen because one is not merely ‘touched’ or ‘affected’ – no, one is *addicted* – implying a stronger and more forceful sentiment toward the inevitable compulsion. In this way, ‘addicted’ attests largely to the quality of *passion* and *commitment* noted in the ‘serious’ artist as discussed in chapter 4.3.

But what is the artist *addicted* to? *Beauty* – it is the quality present in something that gives a person intense pleasure and deep satisfaction both in the intellect and the senses, and it is an intrinsic virtue of the art form itself. Thus, “Addicted to Beauty” refers to the artist being so entranced with that which is *beautiful* – i.e. lovely, delightful, elegant, charming – and in this case, the sentiments expressed in poetry, that she is *compelled* to express it through music.

50. “addicted.” Dictionary.com Unabridged (v 1.1). Random House, Inc. 15 May. 2009. <Dictionary.com <http://dictionary1.classic.reference.com/browse/addicted>>.

I note from my journal:

In response to beauty,
the sublime,

I compose.

Imitating the impression
in my unconscious
being
to
justify
my very existence.

(J. Ing 8/31/08 3:11am)

May the *serious* artist remain, always, 'addicted to beauty' in all she does.

Discography

Bach, Johannes. "Prelude and Fugue # 11 in F major." *The Well-Tempered Clavier Book II. 24 Preludes and Fugues*. Angela Hewitt. Hyperion CD S44291/4.

Beethoven, Ludwig. *Piano Sonata, Op. 27, No. 2 "Moonlight."* Vladimir Horowitz. RCA CD B000003EZJ.

Chopin, Frédéric. "Nocturne in D flat, Op. 27, No. 2" and "Berceuse in D flat, op. 57" from *Great pianists of the 20th century: Artur Rubinstein*. Artur Rubinstein. Philips Classics CD 456 955-2.

Chopin, Frédéric. "Fantaisie-Impromptu in C-sharp minor, Opus posthumous 66" from *Chopin*. Yundi Li. Universal Music Group CD B00005UVZB.

Debussy, Claude. "Arabesque No. 1 & 2," "Children's Corner: I. Doctor Gradus ad Parnassum," and "Clair de lune" from *Debussy: Images; Arabesques; Children's Corner; Clair de Lune; L'Isle Joyeuse*. Simon Trpceski. EMI Classics CD B000ZBPQDU.

Debussy, Claude. "Estampes: Pagodes," "La fille aux cheveux de lin," "La cathédrale engloutie" from *Preludes; Estampes; Masques; Images; Children's corner / Debussy*. Noël Lee. Naïves CD V 1001.

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