

OF MUSICAL WORKS OF ART, INTERPRETATION
AS RE-CREATION:
A STUDY OF THE INTERRELATIONS BETWEEN
COMPOSERS AND PERFORMERS OF THE PIANO.

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DEDICATION

This paper is dedicated with respect and affection to the three people who made its writing possible: to my parents who sent me to London, and to Dr. Ruth Saw who helped me once I arrived! Please accept my gratitude, appreciation, and heartfelt thanks.

Very sincerely,

Greta V. Olsson

SUMMARY

The introduction states the problem. A composition which has never been heard cannot be a work of art. Music is in a special position, for placing it before the public is a complicated matter. The performance is very important; and because of his position, the performer is an artist in his own right.

Part I presents the 'performance theory.' None of the present art theories concerning music will do alone because they do not stress the fact that in order for a composition to establish itself as a masterpiece, it must compete for recognition and prove that it is a superior achievement.

Part II deals with the elements of music. The performance theory stresses the importance of all the elements which comprise a work. Emotions or ideas may be elements in works of art, but we are confined to the object in front of us. We avoid speculation and consider emotion or an idea as it occurs in the object itself.

Part III is concerned with the question of how we determine a 'good' composition. The answer follows Helen Knight's theory on "The Use of 'Good' in Aesthetic Judgments." The use of 'good' involves definite criteria based on the elements which comprise music. Composers work differently, but all must concentrate upon the co-ordination of the elements with which they deal. There are no mysterious elements. Past experiences determine how one thinks, and how one thinks will determine in part how one composes.

Part IV points to the importance of the performer - apart, of course, from the sheerly practical point that he provides for most people the only way of 'getting' the work of art. Through technique, interpretation, and sympathetic understanding, the performer re-creates the composer's work. He is an exhibitionist, and unlike Hindemith's theory, does not disappear behind the music when he is at his piano. His task is to re-create without rewriting. He brings music "to life."

Part V defines the collaboration of the performer and the composer. Each works in a different medium - but toward one goal, the creation of the musical experience. They collaborate over technical points and interpretation. They share a common interest which should breed mutual respect and understanding. They ought to have a knowledge of each other's task which will entail a responsibility toward each other and a willingness to compromise for the best results.

Part VI reveals the audience as spectators. They influence, excite, and inspire the artists to do better work, but they are not "spoken to" directly. Artists' awareness of audience-reaction and press comments indicate the importance of the spectator.

The conclusion summarizes and ends the paper.

INTRODUCTION

The world renowned pianist, Artur Rubinstein, finishes a Chopin Concerto, and the audience applauds wildly. Rubinstein bows and then shakes hands with the conductor and the concertmaster. The orchestra stands. All bow to the applause.

It has been an enjoyable evening. Rubinstein is still as wonderful as ever, and Chopin's music is superb! John Kent, who sits on the left side, tenth row, stops applauding during the seventh curtain call because his arms ache. Let us approach him!

"For whom have you been applauding?" we ask.

"Why, for Rubinstein!" he answers in amazement.

"The orchestra was bowing. Didn't you applaud for them?"

"Oh, yes, of course!"

"For which members in the orchestra?"

"Why, for all of them!" and John Kent's gesture generously sweeps the entire stage.

"But the second violinist was a quick substitute for the one who became ill. He had to struggle with unfamiliar music. Did you applaud for him?"

"I didn't know that he was struggling."

"If you had known, would you still have applauded for him?"

"Yes...perhaps not. I don't know."

"What about Chopin?"

"Oh, yes." John Kent smiles brightly. "I like him. If Rubinstein had played something unfamiliar - some of this modern junk - I couldn't have applauded so enthusiastically."

"If another pianist, equally as good, had performed this concert, would you have applauded for him as strongly?"

"Yes."

"Then would you say that you were applauding more for Chopin than for Rubinstein - since any good performer will do - but not any composer?"

"No. Not any performer will do. The equal of Rubinstein is not common. I would have applauded the same way if Rubinstein had played Debussy whom I like as well as Chopin. It is the combination, Rubinstein playing Chopin, for which I applauded. You know, if Rubinstein had been unable to come tonight, and the piano had stood empty, we would not have had a concert - Chopin or no Chopin."

"If the watchman had not unlocked the theater, we also would not have had a concert. Did you applaud for the watchman?"

"I did not think of it before. Perhaps we should be grateful to him! However, he and his theater are not essential to the musical experience. We could have gone to another theater or to someone's home - as long as we had Rubinstein."

"We could have heard another pianist."

"Yes, and we could have heard another composer, but I would not have liked it so well."

"Why do you insist upon Rubinstein playing Chopin?"

"I don't know. Why do you insist upon asking so many questions? I'm going home."

"Farewell, John Kent."

What is a musical work of art? Is it the product of one man alone or of many men? If of more than one man, how do composers and performers collaborate? What is the role of each? Paul Hindemith has written that the performer may add to our enjoyment, yet the fact that music must depend upon him is an inherent weakness in the musical experience. Is Hindemith correct?

What is the exact relationship between these two complex and temperamental personalities? Is the performer stealing some of the composer's thunder when he bows, or is he accepting a just share of credit and recognition for his part in the musical enterprise? Where does the audience stand in regard to all this?

These are the questions that this paper raises and seeks to answer. I hope to show that there is no such thing as unappreciated beauty. A composition which has never been heard cannot be a work of art. This fact puts music in its own category. When an artist finishes a physical object, it is a simple thing to place it before the public. A painting is hung upon a wall and a poem is printed. It is better to watch a performance of a play, but we can read it for ourselves. But for most, a musical score is "unreadable." Nor can it be read to others. Thus music is in a special position, for placing it before the public is a complicated matter. The performance is extremely important, and this has a reaction on music itself. Because of his position

and responsibility, the performer is an artist in his own right. It is not enough for him to give one performance. Usually he is called upon to do it again. The audience becomes important for it places a strain upon the performer. No artist paints before a group of people who will groan at a mistake or at that which they do not like. The peculiarity of the position of music has a bearing on composition.

It might be objected that a performer is an instrument transmitting music from the composer to an audience, but I hope to show that this is a myth even if it were desirable. When music is played, there is a double judgment - a consideration of the performer and of the composer. And this is how it should be for each makes an equal contribution to the musical experience.

PART I: THE PERFORMANCE THEORY

The arts are the surest means of escaping from the world; they are also the surest means of uniting ourselves to it. Art is concerned with what is difficult and good. In seeing what is difficult performed with ease, we begin to think of the impossible.

Lines which impressed Franz Liszt.
Goethe's Elective Affinities.
(As quoted by de Pourtales in
Liszt, page 21.)

SUPERIOR PERFORMANCE: A THEORY OF ART

The nation's top runners compete in a racing series, and one man, "A", wins consistently. His winning is established by certain factors. The rules of the game determine who wins, and these rules have been followed.

In analyzing why "A" won, one finds that owing either to hard work in an excellent training program or to 'natural' ability (i.e., good co-ordination, strong endurance, or a powerful build), "A" is a superior runner capable of superior performance. He does what his competitors do - only better - and therefore stands out among them.

Let us relate the concept of superior performance to art with a case example. Six-year-old Billy completes a drawing typical of his age level, and Mama rewards him lovingly with, "Oh, Billy, how nice!" However, when the prodigy, David, draws, astonished viewers exclaim, "Excellent work! Amazing!"

Their reaction contains the surprise, delight, and awe that accompany recognition of superior performance. David has done what a million Billys never will: the revelation of unusual observation, understanding, and control of a medium; the unexpected superior performance.

As enthusiasts recognized David's talent, so the world applauds and delights in the genius - and nods politely to the "poet-next-door."

Anyone can make the wooden bucket. It is easily copied. It is the expected result. Those who make it perfectly are craftsmen.

But few can make the valuable art object, the unique, incomparable, superior achievement.

There are no fixed rules in art to determine the "winners," yet critics agree that the works of Bach, Beethoven, and Shakespeare are art objects even if they may differ on their explanatory reasons.

Art is an achievement in terms of elements to mark off. Let us return to racing. Exactly what elements make "A" a winner? His coaches call him a "natural" because he responds very readily to training. He works hard, but one defect remains. "A", exhausted at the end of his races, would be unable to repeat a run immediately, and he never enters long distance competitions. Man "C" does not tire as quickly, yet he finishes in third or fourth place.

If you were to assign points to the racers, "A" would win on these, for he uses excellent judgment in knowing when to sprint, and he has excellent co-ordination, power, and build for racing.

In a racing performance, everything is intended to bring about one result: winning. What can I do to get past the tape first? Let us turn to another sport which is competitive yet has no decisive 'end' to determine the winner, one which is based on a point

system to determine its winners: springboard and platform diving.

Diving probably originated as a practical means of entering the water quickly and safely or for obtaining depth. Today the sport is done for its own sake. The acrobatics in the air serve no specific practical purpose. The stunts demand excellent body control, but a man can develop this by less hazardous means. The diver is not as much concerned with the water as with his board and the amount of air-space in which to perform.

Points are awarded in competitions on the basis of those elements which comprise a good dive: board-work, take-off, difficulty, execution, and entry. In racing, the goal is winning; in diving, to perform as good a dive as possible.

Helen Crklenkovitch Morgan, nine times champion of the U.S.A. and former member of their Olympic team, told me of an experience that demonstrates that a desire to win recognition, to be able to do what you want to do, and to master a difficult technique, is paramount in the diver. When a novice, Helen met an unenthusiastic coach who introduced her to proper board-work (over a sand-pit) and left her. Indeed, forgetting about the ambitious Miss Crklenkovitch, the coach left the club for lunch and returned several hours later to find her there - still working! Impressed, he decided to train her. Later, in a national competition she confessed that one other diver was equally good,

and that it became a contest of who wanted to win the most and had the best nerves to perform well under pressure.

The judging involved in diving is similar to the type of judging which should be used in art. There are no fixed rules in diving to indicate how high a hurdle ought to be, how close the diver should come to his board, nor how clean the entry must be. The judges have done diving themselves or have spent much time around divers, and their experience enables them to judge the contestants. In contrast to racing, but like diving, there is no decisive 'end' to determine the winner in art - there is the dive to be seen and assessed; there is the picture or the poem or the musical composition to be perceived and assessed.

In the small California diving contests that I have watched, three men in various stations near the board, flash cards numbering 1 to 10. A 7-7-5 or 6-7-5 is usual. Complete agreement rarely occurs, but I have never seen the prized 10 shown with a number below 8. 10-9-8 or 10-9-9 is superb rating. When a dive is missed and the 2's and 3's come up, no 8 or 9 confuses the judging. The experts vary more in their decisions about the average dives than about the extremes, and I believe that this is true in art. The "Mona Lisas" and the poor amateurs' work fall into two definite classes. Even non-experts easily differentiate the two.

No definite line separates the excellent dive from the very good one, and no fast boundary exists between art work which is excellent or very good. Because the "very good" makes classification difficult, critics will worry and vary in their opinions about this group.

As one man performs better than another, so one man produces better than another, and as the quality or training of the voice reveal the superior singer, so the quality and originality of the art object reveal the superior artist.

We speak of one artist as being superior to another as easily as we talk of one runner being better than another.¹ This is a good way to talk about art because it is the way that we already do talk. It makes sense. Thus we avoid speculations about states of mind. We are confined to the object before us, and do not need to bother with the question, "Does the communication that the audience receives 'match' the composer's ideas?"

Although I advocate a comparative performance theory, I do not think that it is valuable to argue about the relative merits of established masterpieces ... nor to play one medium against another. Why? You hair-split. Enthusiasts like to speculate about who would win: Joe Lewis or some great fighter of the past;

1. We do not say that Cezanne is better than El Greco or vice versa but that Cezanne and El Greco are better artists than the "X" and "Y" schools of painters because they accomplished what the others attempted to do. It is true that we can place a Cezanne painting beside an El Greco, but this is to prevent yourself from seeing either properly. Each is the outcome of its age and the experiences of its artist.

Maureen Connelly or an Alice Marble. But if we had a battle of the giants, for one to win, so many other heroes would have to fall. You would lose more than you would gain. (The heroes are analogous to the masterpieces of art.) Moreover, such talk must remain speculative. Nothing will do but to match the giants against one another, but this by hypothesis is impossible. Even if it were possible, it would not help us. The development of techniques, etc., is such that an ordinary club member of today might outstrip a 'giant' of the past.

This view limits the use of the performance theory but does not affect the theory itself. Lipstick is a cosmetic for the lips alone. If Miss Tweedley-bird paints it from one of her ears to the other, we deplore her application - not the color. Wine may be beneficial or it may stultify. Maturity and good judgment teach one when to desist. So it is with the performance theory which presents a scheme under which assessments of art works would fall. Properly used it deals with works which are trying to establish themselves. The theory is misused when a critic becomes involved in comparing Greek Art with Renaissance Works. Croce opposed the division of the arts into particular forms. He spoke of styles and standards being set-up. This piece violates its kind. A compromise occurs. A new kind is set-up - until the next artist comes along!

Absurdities occur. Which kind is superior (eg. music or sculpture, etc.) He felt, and I agree, that art works should be individual, loved, and incomparable. But note that he says "art works." An art work ought to be incomparable. But until a work is so classified it must compete.

How do the art works compete?

Artists send their pictures to exhibitions; poets send their poems to the publishers; and composers try to get their work performed. Until the work is before the public in some sense, it is not competing - it is not art nor non-art. A room full of paintings which have never been seen by anyone other than the artist may contain potential masterpieces - but how are we to know until they have been examined by critics and art lovers? What purpose would there be for such works if they were never discovered? They might just as well never exist.

As Louise Brough, Lew Hoad, and Jack Kramer want the comment, "Yes, your tennis is excellent," so every artist wants the remark, "Yes, your work is excellent." When he draws and displays his work, the artist competes for recognition. His goal is to make as good a painting as possible.

Pictures and artists do not compete face to face.

The tennis champion, Don Budge, never saw all the players who were eliminated in the various tournaments in which he played. No one believes that there would

have been a different hero if he had had to oppose every entry. By beating some, he beat them all.

What do we compare in art? A masterpiece serves as an exemplum. It sets the high standard which other works must achieve. It is like an athlete who sets a record which is to be equalled or bettered - although another athlete is not obliged to copy the means that the 'giant' used.

Although works of art are unique objects, they have similar elements, which, heaven forbid, could be listed in cake recipe-fashion. It is true that a painting is more difficult to produce than a cake, but the fact that one process is complex does not elevate it into a penumbra of mystery, inspiration, and god-almighties.

As people who do not play any musical instrument are apt to be too generous in thinking that any playing is "so wonderful" and "so difficult," so those who are the least creative and original may credit the artist with more than he would (in honesty) claim for himself.

The question now arises as to what are the elements to be marked off in art on the basis of which a comparison is to be made? Suppose someone stepped forward to ask how critics might set about putting the performance theory into practice. He asks:

Questioner: "I agree that some art works seem above dispute as ~~AROUND~~ on Shakespeare wrote: 'Others abide our question. Thou art free.' But what about new objects, how are we to judge them?"

I: "How would you judge a race or any sporting event?"

Quest: "Learn the rules of the game and see that these are carried out."

I: "Then if you wish to turn art critic, it seems that you must learn the critics' rules and see that those are carried out."

Quest: "Yes, but the critics disagree. How do I know which one is using the best standards?"

I: "You do not, as they themselves do not. This is a problem that belongs to critics. But perhaps as an aesthetician's approach may help you."

Quest: "How?"

I: "The critic wants to establish criteria for what is a work of art. I believe that if you discover why 'The Mona Lisa' or the Beethoven Quartets are art objects, you will automatically get your standard."

Quest: "Do you mean that you want to discover what elements make 'The Mona Lisa' good and then copy those elements? Won't this lead to a rigid traditionalism?"

I: "No. To copy a painting and to acknowledge its good elements are two different things. If an art object must be original, then it is logically impossible for it to be a copy of something else."

Quest: "How are you going to find these elements?"

I: "Follow me into the aesthetician's debating circle and listen to the answers that various philosophers have given to why 'The Mona Lisa' and the Beethoven Quartets are works of art."

PART II: THE ELEMENTS OF MUSIC

In order to apply the concept of 'superior performance' to works of art, it is essential to analyse the work of art into the elements of which it is composed. When we analyse a painting, we do so in regard to its lines, color, balance, etc. These ingredients cannot be denied, although their exact and relative importance is often debated. There are more elusive elements, difficult to judge, because their very presence is questioned. Such elements are the expression or communication of emotion and the communication of thought.

Consider emotion. My friends and I, being reared in Puritan-like homes, were taught to suppress emotional displays. We are friendly towards each other but not demonstrative. When we are apart, our letters are casual. They are opened with a proper, "Dear Nicole," and closed with a short, "Love, Greta." When a new-found Italian girl friend wrote: "To dearest Greta," and closed with, "A big, big hug and a kiss, Pupa," you can imagine the up-set! The cold, clipped, and near-meaningless ending, "Love, Greta," was no response to such warmth and devotion! Undecided at first just how to reciprocate, I finally shrugged my shoulders and wrote: "A big, big hug and a kiss in return, Greta," and then, delighted with the novelty, immediately started closing all my letters to the States with: "A big, big hug and a kiss (Italian influence), Greta." (The Italian men are even more affectionate - often starting to close a letter two pages in advance. It is impossible to respond adequately.)

When Rabbi Joshua Loth Liebman mixed religion and psychology in his American best-selling book, Peace of Mind, he highly recommended the expression of grief when in travail. This surprised me. I remember when Vice-President Nixon, running-mate of Eisenhower, spoke during their first election campaign and under heavy questioning broke down; he wept on Eisenhower's shoulder. Although some pitied him, many saw the tears as a sign of weakness and lost confidence in him.

Because the dispositions and training of people greatly vary, their attitude toward emotional situations and emotional displays differs. Some respect the reserved, the distant, and the dignified. Some trust only the actually cold. Others prefer the open, the immediate, and the natural. Thus it is to be expected that people's opinions will differ in regard to emotion in music. When musicians disagree about the value of a new composition, it might result from their reaction to the emotional associations that the music suggests. Otto Ortmann discusses this in "Types of Listeners." As reported by Max Schoen, he says that when after a modern novelty, one musician exclaims: "Wonderful!" and another equally talented musician says: "Rotten!" the difference cannot be sensorial, or in this case, even perceptual. Instead, each listener brings to bear upon the objective stimulus an experience extremely rich in auditory and non-auditory associations, and the stimulus is responded to and interpreted in the

light of this experience.

Composers, too, vary in this respect. Chopin made friends easily. His letters are open, warm, and confiding. His music is considered emotional. Stravinsky's autobiography is impersonal and cold. He confesses the lack of close childhood friends, and it is not surprising that he deplores a conductor's freedom in interpretation. He asks for a conductor-machine who will adhere strictly to the rules that he himself lays down.

But to return to the audience.

John Hospers refers to a number of experiments in music listening in Meaning and Truth in the Arts and says that one fact emerges (Page 83): "There seem to be two principal well-defined groups: those who hear music 'pure,' without 'emotive' meanings or associations from life¹ and those who hear it as an expression of emotions or some other extra-musical content. The more experienced a listener becomes, the more he is inclined toward the former of the two groups."

1. Santayana in The Sense of Beauty speaks of associated feelings; one object has a tendency or quality characteristic of other objects and feelings associated with them in experience.

Why does experience lead away from emotion? Asked to write a melodic line for a harmony exercise, I found myself concentrating on the combinations of sounds and the avoidance of the "non-classical" intervals - the augmented second, augmented fourth, seventh, and ninth.¹ It was characteristic of my personality to choose an adagio tempo, but I certainly was not thinking of a certain emotion or feeling anything in particular. My concentration was outside myself. But if I had not had certain rules to consider, I would probably have recalled some emotional experience or fallen into a mood as I improvised. I believe that if listeners are given something else to think about, they do not have time to hear music as an expression of emotions. Also, as the first impact lessens in repeated hearings of a composition, one tends to notice other things in the music - eg. when the melody is transferred from one instrument to another in an orchestra or when a major key becomes minor, etc.

1. Edward Gurney, who claims that music is separated from life-experience, speaks of a "particular musical faculty" employed in composing. The composer is aware of the "necessity" of certain combinations of notes. Certain combinations are more beautiful owing to the musical structure. (The answer to Gurney is that language is inadequate to describe musical experiences. Music is its own language which may add to a spoken medium but which cannot be translated into words.)

Thus when the literary-minded and poetic George Sand heard Liszt, she wrote (de Pourtales: Liszt, page 67):

When Franz plays I am comforted. All my sorrows become poetry, all my instincts are exalted... I love these broken phrases which he flings on the piano and which remain half in the air. The leaves of the lindens finish the melody for me... Mighty artist, sublime in great things, always superior in small ones, and yet sad, gnawed by a secret wound.

While someone else received no comfort - perhaps even annoyance - and did not suspect a 'secret wound' or sadness.

I believe that I have shown that people are different; some do and some do not hear emotion expressed in music. I have indicated some reasons why people differ. But which is the 'proper' condition? Are some people reacting wrongly? Paul Hindemith reported that the Roman Philosopher, Sextus Empiricus (ca. 200A.D.) said that music as a mere play with tones and forms, can express nothing. It is always our own sentiment that ascribes to the ever-changing combination of tones qualities which correspond with certain trends in our mental disposition. And Hanslick points out that any emotional reaction varies from person to person and from period to period, or it may not appear at all. Favoring an objective-scientific approach to music, he claims that there is no causal nexus between certain notes and a certain feeling. (Vocal music may indicate feelings, but this arises from its words,

and in such a case, the music may become unimportant as in recitative.)

To quote from Hanslick:

The thrilling effect of a theme is owing, not to the supposed extreme grief of the composer, but to the extreme intervals; not to the beating of his heart, but to the beating of the drums; not to the craving of his soul, but to the chromatic progression of the music.

Hanslick's argument depends upon the fact that there is no causal nexus between certain notes and a particular feeling. Hume used a similar argument to show that it was logically possible to put a lighted match to kerosene and not cause a fire. Theoretically the gentlemen are correct. In practice they are not, since a match to kerosene will cause a fire and, as the Max Schoen tests indicate, some 'mood' music will cause an anticipated reaction.

Dr. Schoen in The Effects of Music quotes Esther L. Gatewood's "An Experimental Study of the Nature of Musical Enjoyment" in which she says that there is a dominant feeling tone to many musical selections which is definite enough to affect all hearers more or less alike.

I believe that philosophers disagree about emotion in music, because they analyse the phrase, "express emotion," differently. Hanslick thinks of a particular experience - eg. the end of such-and-such a war on such-and-such a date. Stravinsky also follows this line.

He says that we ask the impossible if we expect music to express feelings. He cites Beethoven's Third Symphony which according to a Russian critic declares man to be Master of the Earth! Stravinsky says that this is giving to music a meaning which it cannot possibly have.

Music cannot convey a specific feeling. No one in listening to new and untitled music can receive a "message" or explicit idea from it. We have examples like Debussy's "La Mer." Some do and some do not hear, see, or feel the sea in it. It is significant that he had to give us a title so that we can be certain what he was "drawing."

But there are the abstract qualities of emotion which Roger Sessions has listed as: speed, tension, elan, energy, and pulse. For him, music expresses and defines movement. It is the listener who defines the emotion. He says that music cannot arouse a specific emotion and this is where the communication and expressive theory break down. But it can animate our feelings, which is a clear and definite communication. (It is an art when the communication is significant.)

Gordon Jacob says that music cannot have "one precise and unequivocal meaning - although it can vitalize and drive home a meaning which is known to be there. Without a title, it gives types: fierce, tender, calm, stormy, mysterious, direct, sinister, soothing, grand or trivial, solemn or amusing.

"If the music is stormy, we are left to ask what kind of a storm - tempest, rage, stampede, or air-raid?

"The emotional reaction of the listener is therefore conditioned by his own experiences, his thoughts, and his mood at the time of the music's impact on him. The composer has been prompted by his own impulses to express himself in that way or perhaps the music has just happened to take that shape at that moment without any reason that the composer could give except that he was led there in the course of the development of his themes."

Certainly all people should react in the same way to the speed, pulse, etc. of a given composition. If someone hears a very fast tempo as very slow, he is reacting wrongly. But this is not to say that we 'ought' to feel a certain emotion.

What we have shown so far is that people differ emotionally and therefore react differently to emotion in music. People 'read into' it what they will, so we cannot expect a true reaction from them. But Max Schoen and Esther L. Gatewood say that there is a dominant feeling tone to some compositions which ought to affect listeners more or less alike.

Let us consider "feeling tone" further. First let us ask, what exactly do we hear when we listen to a musical composition and what qualities can we ascribe to it?

Play a chord, C-E-G. A harmony sounds. The C, E, and G do not 'mean' anything as the three letters, R, E, and D 'mean' the color, red. The symbols of language

are fixed, while in music they are not.

But musically the chord, C-E-G, does have meaning. If it occurs in the key of C, it can close a musical phrase. It conveys a feeling of completeness. If a composer tried to end a composition on its key's leading tone, there would be a very uncomfortable feeling, a sense of incompleteness, and a desire for still one more note - a finishing note. I recall school children in the United States getting tired of a popular patriotic song, "The Stars and Stripes Forever." They began to sing it with different words and ended it abruptly mid-way through, where you could not end the song. They did it for sheer devilment, and it was effective. Even the patient and the long-suffering wanted to silence these singers - and by any method!

What is the essence of music? Hanslick says that it is sound and motion. No one can deny that one hears sounds when one listens to music.

Consider the physical properties that musical sounds have. Morris Weitz lists: strength, motion, ratio, and rhythm. By these, other properties are created: intensity waxing and waning; motion hastening and lingering; and progression. Thus music obtains certain expressive qualities - the graceful, the violent, the vigorous, or the elegant. These are intrinsic, independent of ~~any~~ ^{PARTICULAR} listener.

When Frank Howes spoke on "Emotion in Music" on January 31, 1957 at Senate House, he also described abstract emotion. Music can tell us how strong a feeling is without the reason why. He referred to the finale of Sibelius' Second Symphony and the change in keys from D minor to D major. This change indicates relief after tension, certainty after uncertainty, although we do not know what tension and what uncertainty. It is like the pleasure of seeing the sun after the clouds have passed.

Is music then an odd type of language capable of communicating thoughts? I would agree with Paul Hindemith in saying no. He cites a discrepancy in interpretation. (Hindemith: A Composer's World, pages 34 and 35)

In hearing oriental music for the first time, the Western listener usually cannot detect any musical significance in it - which it would have, if music was an internationally recognized and understandable language. The strangeness of its sounds will strike him as funny, even ridiculous, and the only emotional urge he will feel will be a desire to laugh... A composer who wanted to use music in the same sense a language is used could do so only by preparing a voluminous dictionary, in which each particle of a musical form corresponded with a verbal equivalent.

We do have cases of pictorial music:

Debussy's "Afternoon of a Faun."

Honegger's railway train.

Mossolov's factory.

Elgar's romantic fountains in "The Wand of Youth."

Moussorgsky's "Pictures from an Exhibition."

But Gordon Jacob says, "Music must stand firm and square as music and should not demand of the audience more than an imaginative response to some simple, basic, and easily comprehended idea, and it must be cast in logical and satisfying musical form so that it hangs together and is not constantly running into side-tracks in order to illustrate or comment upon some passing detail of fact or fancy."

Consider the opinions of other composers in regard to whether music does or does not express feelings. This story is told of Chopin. As a teacher he used to lament greatly over one pupil who studied with indefatigable diligence and perseverance, and possessed all the qualities for becoming an artist of the first rank except the most essential of all - feeling.

Liszt's light opera, Don Sancho, was presented at the Royal Academy of Music on October 17, 1824. The music was a disappointment. "It did not occur to anyone, until too late, that a child of fourteen could not illustrate very sincerely the passionate nonsense of a pastoral by Florian."

Again turning to Gordon Jacob and his book, The Composer and His Art, we find him saying (page 120):

Original ideas do not of themselves produce great works. The composer whose outlook is primarily intellectual and technical may make new sounds but unless his music has the power to move the heart as well as the mind, it is as dry and tedious as that of the dullest and most conventional purveyor of

derivative music...

Craftsmanship can give a mere display of clever but empty showmanship, but sound technical equipment can give one the power of expressing any mood he wishes to conjure up... Pure music speaks its own language... Masterpieces are produced by exactly the right blend of inspiration and good workmanship so that it is impossible to tell where one ends and the other begins, because inspiration evokes its right and proper means of expression, and good workmanship can in itself provide fertile soil in which inspiration can flourish.

On the other hand, we have a composer like Paul Hindemith who is against the theory that music can express emotions. In his book, A Composer's World, he asks, "Who is supposed to have the emotion, composer, performer, individual listener, or the audience?" Are the feelings general, the specification of which is left to the members of any of these groups?

He says that in creating it could not be the composer's feelings at the time of writing owing to the length of time involved. A funeral piece might take three months to complete, and it would be impossible for the artist to sustain one emotion. Someone suggests that the composer might have a particular emotion just when he starts to write. (Page 36):

...notwithstanding his own feelings of hilarity, jocularity, and whatever else he is going to experience during the time of incubation? This idea is even more

ridiculous than the preceding one, because there is no reason why in a series of feelings just the first one, owing to its position, would be of greater importance. If anything the last one would be more prominent while the first had lost its significance.

I disagree with this last. The composer certainly could, when he started working again, recall a particular mood; he might read over the earlier sections to get himself back into the appropriate state. This is like when an actor wins at pool and then must go on stage to play a tragic part. During the performance he puts aside his feelings of joy. He concentrates on his part, for while he is speaking his lines he cannot at the same time be planning how he is going to spend his money. It is true that the winning may give him a mental lift so that he feels more alert in delivering his lines, but he will not "feel joyful" until his task is completed on the stage and he can tell his friends his good news.

Peter Latham in writing about Beethoven in Lives of the Great Composers tells about one incident which he thought argued against reading a composer's life and ascribing emotion, etc., into his works. In Heiligenstadt, October 10, 1802, Beethoven wrote his will in which he told of his illness and his despair:

...thus do I take my farewell of thee - and indeed sadly - yes, that beloved hope - which I brought with me when I came here to be cured at least in a degree I must wholly abandon, as the leaves of Autumn fall

and are withered so hope has been blighted,
almost as I came - I go away - even the
high courage - which often inspired me in
the beautiful days of summer - has disappeared -
O Providence - grant me at least one day
of pure joy - it is so long since real
joy echoed in my heart - Oh when, O Divine
One - shall I feel it again in the temple
of nature or of men - Never? no - O that
would be too hard.

Peter Latham points out the surprising fact that
it was from Heiligenstadt that Beethoven brought
his sunny Second Symphony, "the most light-hearted
of them all!" Yet it is significant that Beethoven
asked when should he feel (joy) again. The sunny Second
Symphony probably reflects the joy of another time -
written perhaps during the "beautiful days of summer"
when he felt hopeful rather than at the time of his
writing his will. Beethoven need not have been bowed
during his entire stay at Heiligenstadt.

Hindemith believes that composers do this:
they know by experience that certain patterns of
tone-setting correspond with certain emotional reactions
on the listener's part. "Writing these patterns
frequently and finding his observations confirmed, in
anticipating the listener's reaction he believes
himself to be in the same mental situation. From here
it is a very small step to the further conviction that
he himself is not only reproducing the feelings of
other individuals, but is actually having these same

feelings, being obsessed by them whenever he thinks he needs them, and being urged to express them with each stroke of his ever-ready pen. He believes that he feels what he believes the listener feels; he tries to construct musically the ultimate ring of this strange chain of thought - and consequently he does not express his own feelings in his music."

This idea would be difficult to prove. It is assuming that the composer is either a fool or incapable of detecting self-deception.

Listen to comments by various artists. Some deny that they express or try to evoke an emotional response. Mondrian does not even mention his audience.

Edward Gurney in The Power of Sound (page 357) quotes Schumann:

Critics always wish to know what the composer himself cannot tell them; and critics sometimes hardly understand the tenth part of what they talk about. Good heavens! will the day ever come when people will cease to ask us what we mean by our divine compositions. Pick out the fifths, but leave us in peace...

Schumann also said:

Can that which cost the artist days, weeks, months, and even years of reflection be understood in a flash by the dilettante?

Carl Nielsen in Living Music (page 30) believes:

If one were to ask a composer what he meant by a particular chord, or by a succession of tones, the only answer he could really give,

would be to play or sing the passage.

This idea is supported by Mendelssohn who said:

If you asked me what I thought on the occasion in question, I say, the song itself precisely as it stands.

Mendelssohn in a letter to his sister told of critics speaking of red coral and green sea monsters in his work.

This is stupid stuff and fills me with amazement.

Thus on the one hand we have an artist like Mondrian who writes (as quoted in Hosper's Meaning and Truth in the Arts, page 101):

Impressed by the vastness of nature, I was trying to express its expansion, rest, and unity.

While on the other hand Marc Chagall says (also quoted by Hospers):

But please defend me against people who speak of "anecdote" and "fairytale" in my work. A cow and a woman to me are the same - in a picture both are merely elements of a composition....different values of plasticity, - but not different poetic values...

Hindemith considers whether the emotion ought to be that of the performer's and concludes that it should not. Performers are an "intermediate station," "a roadside stop," "a transformer house" between the "current that flows from the composer's brain to

the listener's mind."

Our system of notation can only give performers an approximation of the composer's intentions.

The performer should not express his own feelings, for in so doing he changes his function from that of a transformer to a competing generator - and the shocks received from the clashing of two different currents always hit the innocent listener. He is fooling himself. What he thinks are his feelings is again the series of conclusions mentioned before: observed correspondence of music and the emotional effect on the listener - confirmation by frequent recurrence - identification of himself with those effects - the belief that he himself "feels" them.

The composers' and performers' unconscious starting point was the listeners' emotional reaction, intellectually anticipated. The listeners, having these emotional reactions as the final result of the musical process do not actually start with the intellectual anticipation of them. Their chain of reasoning is:

- (1) The composer expresses his feelings in his music - which opinion, although wrong, is excusable, since the listener is unaware of the composer's previous miscalculations.
- (2) The performer expresses the composer's or his own feelings (equally wrongly, as we have seen).
- (3) The composer's and performer's feelings, expressed in their musical production, prompt me to have the same or similar feelings.

Since the listeners' conclusions are based on the composers' and the performers' false suppositions, they cannot contain any truth, and we can also state that the listeners' individual or collective feelings are not expressed in music.

Here the emotional state of the composer, performer, and audience are referred to without differentiating them or discussing their interconnections. I hope to make clear their distinctive roles in a later chapter.

Hindemith concludes that what is expressed are images and the memories of feelings.

Music touches both the intellectual and the emotional parts of our mental life. Intellectually we build up structures parallel to actual musical ones, and these mental structures receive weight and moral meaning through the attitude we assume towards their audible or imaginary originals: either we consciously allow music to impress us with its ethic power, or we transform it into moral strength. Emotionally we simply are the slaves of musical impression and react to their stimulus, inevitably and independent of our own will power, with memories of former actual feelings.

Tempo and heart beat are suppose to be the physiologic or psychologic connection between music and those images. The practical value of this viewpoint to a composer's work is that he may consider these things as hurdles, or he may not bother to think about them at all. Hindemith says that there are no rules for the working of creative minds.

For Hindemith, a work of art is a congruence of vision and the materialization of that vision. Music is a form of communication between the author and the consumer of his music. (He does not say what form of communication - nor how it takes place. Hindemith was the one who said that if music were a language, the composer would need a dictionary! If we have communication without a language, what is communicated and how? He does not say.)

I believe that a composer may use an emotional phrase or an emotionally toned key in a work of art as an artist may choose to use color in a painting. Such music is an analog of our emotional life. It has force and subtlety. Frank Howes in his talk which we mentioned before referred to the last scene from Verdi's Othello, in which Desdemona experiences psychological horror. The music adds something to the words with its dynamic quality and pitch relationships. Surely this accounts for music's wide use in films.

Francis Toye says that when Verdi put Victor Hugo's story, "Le Roi S'Amuse," to music in the opera, "Rigoletto," (Bacharach: Lives of the Great Composers, vol. 3, page 123): "the dramatic qualities were so much enhanced by the music that Victor Hugo himself, who started with a violent prejudice against the opera, became one of its warmest admirers."

Thus to conclude this section on the elements of music let me repeat that music can give us an abstract emotion. It can tell us how strong a feeling is without revealing to us the reason why. The composer ~~usually~~ ^{may} ~~have had the~~ experiences of which he writes, and he recollects ~~them~~ in his work.

Thus emotion is one element to be considered in many works of art. When it is present, it comprises part of the analysis of the work. If there is communication of thought, the thought is a musical 'idea' or a vague thought. Let me explain "vague thought." If you were to ask forty people to define "freedom" or "truth" there would be many divergent opinions. And if you were to ask forty people to tell what a musical phrase means, there would be no greater agreement. Yet we use "freedom" in contrast to "confinement" or "restriction," etc. and probably understand a slow, legato musical phrase in opposition to a fast, staccato one. In such cases, the vague ideas become meaningful in relation to some opposing idea.

The other elements to be considered in judging a work of art are those very ones that the aestheticians and the art critics do consider! I am not suggesting that the critics develop and use a definite point system, but I do believe that every element that composes a painting ought to be considered in a rating of that painting.

This allows for the development of new elements, for when something new 'works,' it ought to be accepted and considered.

It is interesting to note that the masterpieces fulfil all the aestheticians' theories - whether they be significant form, emotion, expression, empathy, psychical distance, etc. The reason why is that a masterpiece is a superior performance, a product which is created better than most others, and which shows a combination of skilled technique (i.e., good form and design, balance, harmony, etc.), originality, and in some cases the evocation or expression of emotion. But in applying our concept of 'superior achievement' we do not relate it to what the artist sets out to achieve. What he intended is speculative. As you would look at a painting to see if there is color in it, so you would listen to a composition to hear if there is a formal pattern, an arabesque of sounds, or if there is tension or other emotional qualities in it. What the composer intended is not relevant any more than the diver's intention to enter the water eventually is relevant in evaluating the quality of his dive.

PART III: COMPOSITION

An analysis of the process of composition is difficult, because composers do not work alike. One writes with great ease. Another labors. One must work at his instrument,¹ and another hears the work in his mind.²

1. Rachmaninoff depended heavily upon his piano. He needed it to put him (Lyle; Rachmaninoff, page 74) "into contact, literally, with inspiration to set the text to music." When he wanted to start his first opera, "Alekó," for a gold medal award at the Moscow Conservatoire, he burst into tears because his father was entertaining, and Rachmaninoff had to wait for the piano.
2. Beethoven, Smetana, and Robert Franz suffered from deafness. Their music has peculiarities since the composer could not test his work at the piano. Wallace writes in regard to Smetana's String Quartet in E minor (The Musical Faculty, page 92): "...it is asserted that a persistent high note in the finale is understood to be a deliberate statement concerning a note, similarly persistent to his own ear, which was the effect of his deafness." And in regard to Beethoven's Finale of the Choral Symphony: "Here the voices sing for the most part at the highest point of their compass, and the sound to many is anything but pleasant." It was also said of Faure that he was troubled with hearing in his last twenty years and that higher frequencies sounded to him flat and lower ones sharp. His last appearance in public concert was at Tours in 1921 and he had to play without listening and to keep in time with his partners by watching them. (See Suckling, Master Musicians: Faure, page 36.)

On the one hand, someone like Chopin speaks of being in the mood for composing and having a definite picture in mind. This is seen in his letter to Titus from Warsaw, May 15, 1830 (Karasowski; Chopin, pages 132 and 133):

The Rondo for the new Concerto is not ready yet. I have not been in the right mood to finish it. When the Allegro and Adagio are quite done with, I shall not be in any anxiety about the Finale.

The Adagio in E major is conceived in a romantic, quiet, half melancholy spirit. It is to give the impression of the eye resting on some much loved landscape which awakens pleasant recollections, such as an exquisite spring moonlight night.

On the other hand, Igor Stravinsky makes a plea in the Poetics of Music (page 7):

...if you attribute any importance, however slight, to my creative work - which is the fruit of my conscience and my faith - then please give credit to the speculative concepts that have engendered my work and that have developed along with it.

Stravinsky says that he needs to compose. For him it is habitual and periodic - not fortuitous like inspiration. It is discovery and hard work that attracts him, and invention for him is a "lucky find." He warns one not to look for a philosophy of art in his work nor a description of his creating process. He quotes Tchaikovsky (Chronical of My Life, page 277):

Since I began to compose I have made my object to be in my craft, what the most illustrious Masters were in theirs, that

is to say, I wanted to be, like them, an artisan, just as a shoemaker is... (They) composed their immortal works exactly as a shoemaker makes shoes; that is to say, day in, and day out, and for the most part to order.

Stravinsky adds, "How true that is!"

The conclusion resulting is that creation is not mechanical, and its methods are not fixed. As William Wallace pointed out in The Musical Faculty, the composer cannot enter his studio, as the banker does his chambers, and find the day's work either in progress or carefully prescribed for him. His work and his methods are his own, and he probably becomes more upset by inaction, disturbance, or the loss of time than other workers. His concentration must extend over long periods of time. A sudden noise - the opening of a door or a boy whistling - might cause him to lose a theme. William Wallace has pointed out that it is difficult to write a musical phrase while other music is being played for external sound is stronger than internal sound. One could paint, read, etc. and not be as much disturbed.

A fact now emerges. A work of art is the result of intense concentration (regardless of the artist's speed in producing.) Beethoven one time said that genius was more a capacity for much work than it was talent. Henri Poincaré's description of how his own discoveries were made ~~bears~~^{bars} this out. In a chapter on

"Mathematical Discovery" in Science and Method (translated by Francis Maitland, London, 1914, pages 46 to 53 - as quoted by Wallace, The Musical Faculty, page 127):

Often when a man is working at a difficult question, he accomplishes nothing the first time that he sets to work. He rests... resumes work...inspiration. We might say that the conscious work proved more fruitful because it was interrupted, and the rest restored force and freshness to the mind. But it is more probable that the rest was occupied with unconscious work, and that the result of this work came during a period of conscious work, but independently of that work, which at most only performs the unlocking process...

A man driving to work in the morning might plan his entire day's activities in his mind and thus give the least possible attention to what he does behind the wheel of his car. (Students in California are considered to be poor insurance risks because they will not concentrate on the road.) But an artist cannot create in this manner. He must think about what he is doing. Our question now becomes, about what does the composer think? And we will only get an answer by turning to music itself. We have seen in the previous chapter that music is composed of definite elements. Music is inconceivable without (for example) the elements of sound and time.¹

1. But (as William Wallace said) an anatomical study of the auditory apparatus in man throws no more light upon the composer's special endowment than an investigation of the retina does upon the art of the painter.

A good composition will handle these elements well.

Since new composers struggle to produce "good compositions," and the 'winners; the art masterpieces, are "good compositions;" and we would like to know how we can distinguish a "good composition" from one that is not, it is very much to our point to ask what do we mean when we say that a composition is "good?"

Helen Knight has given an intelligent and valuable answer to this question in her essay on "The Use of 'Good' in Aesthetic Judgments."

Miss Knight shows that the use of 'good' involves definite criteria. She argues against a naturalistic analysis of 'good' or 'beautiful' in terms of liking, satisfaction, or desire.

She distinguishes 'good' in a general and a specific sense. In the general sense, satisfaction of the desire for aesthetic experience might be thought to be a criterion. In the specific sense it is not. For example, Miss Knight's mental state is not a criterion for the goodness of Helen Wills' tennis. The good of Aesthetic judgments belongs to the specific uses. 'Cézanne's "Green Jar" is good' is like 'good tennis playing.' She explains (Aesthetics and Language, edit. by Elton, page 149):

Suppose I am looking at a game of tennis and say "that's a good player." If someone asks me "why?" or "what do you mean?" I answer by

pointing out features of his playing. I say, for example, that his strokes are swift, that his placing is accurate, and point to the speed of his footwork. In making these remarks I am showing that he satisfies the criteria. I am indicating features of his playing that are criteria for its goodness. And this is what my questioner expected. It is the only answer that any of us expects in our ordinary conversations. We give our meaning by pointing out criterion-characters.

..."He's a good player" says in a sense far less than "His aim is accurate" ... But though "He's a good player" says less than one reason, yet in a sense it stretches over all.

(Page 151)

...the meaning of 'good' is determined by criteria. And this is to say that the truth and falsity of "He is a good so-and-so" depends on whether he possesses criterion-characters or not; and that the natural answer to the question, "What do you mean?" lies in pointing out these characters. But, on the other hand, "He is a good so-and-so" is not equivalent to any proposition which asserts the possession of a criterion-character, nor to a group of such propositions. This lack of equivalence is marked by the use of 'because' which introduces the criterion propositions. A clear way of stating the difference would be to give a great many cases in which goodness and criterion propositions are differently used. For example: "He is good, but his placing is not accurate;" "He is not good, but has a smashing service;" "He is good, his service is smashing and his returns are speedy;" "He is good, he is steady and reliable, his service is not smashing and his returns are not speedy.

.....

Suppose I say that Cézanne's "Green Jar" is a good picture and someone asks me "why?" or "What do you mean?" I should answer by describing it. I should point out a number of facts about its organization, for example: that apple is placed so that it exactly balances the main mass on the right; the lines of tablecloth, knife, and shadows repeat each other; the diagonal of the knife counteracts the diagonals of the shadows. All these objects, I might continue, are exceedingly solid and the shadows exceedingly deep - each thing "is infallibly in its place". I might point out a number of important problems that Cezanne has solved; for example, that he combines a geometrical scheme with the variety we get in natural appearances. And finally I might allude to the profundity and gravity of the picture. In this description I have pointed out criterion-characters, the "Green Jar" is good because it possesses them.

She considers a case in which there is a change of judgment.

I decide that a picture is bad. Then someone points out its construction, and I see the picture in a new way. The figures had seemed a mere haphazard collection. I now see a diagonal movement in which the figures participate, and as I follow this movement the space recedes, giving a strong impression of depth. And I reverse my judgment. What determines the change? My perception of how the picture is constructed, my recognition of a criterion-character.

...We now see that 'good' may be indefinable and yet not stand for an indefinable quality, and that it has significance even though in one sense it stands for nothing.

Miss Knight points out that we judge one painting by one set of criteria and another painting by another set.

There are a great many alternative standards. To a large extent these are set by the artist or school. An artist tries to produce a certain effect, and his purpose is shaped by a number of factors: the use of a certain medium (oil, tempera, etc.), interest in a certain kind of form (classical, baroque, etc.), in a certain kind of subject (the poetic, the commonplace, etc.). All these factors provide criteria, and each provides a large number of alternative criteria. I do not say that the artist's aim is our only critical measure, but it is extremely important and mainly responsible for the diversity of standards.

Suppose someone agrees with me on the criteria of a certain painting, but disagrees on whether it is 'good' or not?

Either through ignorance or prejudice many people habitually use 'good' with certain meanings and not with others. And when we look at the matter in this light we see that a great deal of aesthetic disagreement is linguistic. It is disagreement in the use of 'good'.

She considers comparative judgments, 'this picture is better than that'.

Such judgments are most profitable when we compare pictures that resemble each other pretty closely, two water colours, two Impressionist paintings, two Baroque paintings, etc. In such cases we judge both pictures by the same criteria.

But what about the comparison of pictures which are good for different reasons? I believe that in some cases this would be nonsensical. It is nonsense to ask whether Raphael or Rembrandt is the better artist, whether rugged scenery is better than soft... In these cases we can only state a preference for one or the other. But we do make comparative judgments where the criteria are different. Raphael's 'School of Athens' is better than a water colour by Crome or a cartoon by Max Beerbohm. But Crome and Beerbohm were aiming at completely different ends from Raphael, and their pictures may be perfect of their kind. The explanation of these comparative judgments is, I believe, that some criteria are higher than others. I mean by this simply that when pictures excel by some criteria we say they are better than if they excel by others. The criteria by which Raphael excels, such as space, composition, organization of groups, expressiveness, dignity, are among the very highest.

.....

What determines the truth of "so-and-so is a criterion for goodness in pictures"? The guarantee, I would answer, lies in its being used as a criterion. Organization of groups, space composition, profundity, etc., are criteria of goodness because they are used as such. But we must face a difficulty. Who is it that uses them? It is true that some are in general use. There is also the important fact that we often use criteria without being able to name or distinguish them. But we must acknowledge that some are only used by critics, and not even by all of them. We must admit that criteria are not firmly fixed, like the points (at any one time) of a Pekingese. But it

completely misrepresents the situation to say they are not fixed at all.

Perhaps I should also point out that the fixing of criteria is one thing, and their use another. When we make aesthetic judgments we are using criteria, and are not talking about the circumstances in which they are fixed. They are fixed by certain people who no doubt have their reasons for preferring some to others. But we do not refer to these facts in our aesthetic judgments.

Relate Miss Knight's theory to music. We will judge a composition 'good' on the basis of its elements and not in terms of liking, satisfaction, or desire. A good composition will possess criterion-characters. We could point out "a number of facts about its organization." The harmonies are well written and do not break any of the classical rules. This sequence of notes seems naturally to lead into that sequence; the modulations are different and therefore are interesting; etc.

As with a painting, we may judge one composition by one set of criteria and another composition by another set. Composers and their schools vary as much as artists and their schools do. Composers may use different mediums (orchestra, solo instrument, the voice with harp accompaniment, quartet, etc.) or different forms (classical, romantic, etc.) - which provide criteria, and each provides a large number of alternative criteria. It would be ridiculous to

look for emotional qualities in an arabesque pattern of sounds or in the formal designs of the classical school, as it would be to ignore the emotional quality in romantic compositions.

If someone agrees with me on the criteria of a certain composition, but disagrees on whether it is 'good' or not, he is using 'good' in a different way from me. It is a linguistic difference resulting from prejudice or ignorance. It does not relate to, or reflect upon, the composition itself.

When we consider comparative judgments, 'this composition is better than that' it is easier and more profitable to do so when we compare compositions that resemble each other closely: two études, two preludes, two songs, etc. In such cases we judge these compositions by the same criteria. But as it would be nonsensical to ask whether Raphael or Rembrandt is the better artist (remember the discussion in a previous chapter against the comparison of masterpieces) so it would be nonsensical to ask whether Bach or Beethoven is the better composer. You may have a preference. But we can make a comparative judgment where the criteria are different. The music of Bach, Beethoven, and Brahms is better than jazz. The criteria by which these three composers excel are among the highest. Jazz aims at something entirely different...something less difficult to achieve.

Even though composers' methods vary, their task is the same. By 'task' I do not mean the expression of emotion or ideas except as these are to be discovered in the work itself. The composer's task is to coordinate the elements which he chooses to use. He must compose with a necessary reference to the performers and instruments which are to place his composition before the audience. He must take note in every stage as to what will be done by the performer. He must have a thorough knowledge of the instrument for which he writes. If not, difficulties will occur. Rimsky-Korsakov gives us an illustration of the type of difficulties which may occur when a composer is not equal to his task. He began writing instrumental music before he had learned various instruments' compass. It was not surprising that he wrote things which were unplayable. 'Composer's intent' becomes ridiculous in such circumstances.

F. Bonavia in a chapter on "The Solo Instrument" (A.L. Bacharach (editor), The Musical Companion, page 571) tells of another result which takes place when composers do not know their instruments:

As a substitute for the full orchestra
it (the piano) is invaluable. It is
also the cause of much imperfect musicianship

in some modern composers and conductors who, having never been trained to seek the finer shades of tone and colour in sustained harmonic sound, have lost the power to appreciate them.

The attitude of mind created by the pianoforte has left its mark on the course of musical art. The pianist as composer often missed his objective because he could not completely adapt himself to the new medium.

If a composer must deal with specific elements and relate them to such tangible objects as instruments and performers, is he involved in a craft rather than an art? Let us go back to Stravinsky's idea of art as like the shoemakers' craft. Aristotle and Plato spoke of poetry as a poet-craft. As a shoemaker creates shoes for demand, so the poet makes poetry - with his audience in mind. Certainly craftsmanship is involved in compositions, but one immediately thinks of Collingwood, who so strongly warned us against confusing art and craft. He said that the ^{METHODS} ~~means~~ of art and craft are different. The means to making a horseshoe is lighting the forge, cutting iron off a bar, heating it, etc., but the poet's means are in his head. Getting paper, pen, etc. is preparation for writing - not composing. A shoe takes planning, but the artist could create art by accident, or he could aim at one audience-effect and get another. If art were craft, this could not be. The artist must have technique like a craftsman, but he must have "something more."

I would certainly want to agree with Collingwood in distinguishing art and craft, however, I would do so on the basis that art involves originality, uniqueness, and a superior performance while craft does not. Collingwood said that a shoe takes planning, but that the artist could create art by accident. What is creating art by accident? Is it not that the artist 'planned' for one effect and then discovered that he had achieved some other result? Planning was involved - although the result was different. Or is art-by-accident an unconscious thing? An Italian workman wrote a powerful and unique short story, "Christ in Concrete," which the "New Yorker" magazine printed because of its unusual quality. Readers begged for more of his work, but there is no more. He has never been able to repeat this "accident." We would not call this writer 'good' in the sense that established writers are 'good'. We would be more apt to say that he was lucky once. Yet we would not say that the Italian workman, like the famous typing apes, was able to write a wonderful story without intelligence behind it. The "accident" was not that much an "accident."

Collingwood raised a second point. He said that an artist must have 'something more' than mere technique. What is this 'something more'? He answered that it was inspiration and expression. It is as Debussy said in an interview in Le Martyre de Saint-Sebastien

(O. Thompson, Debussy, page 22):

The sound of the sea, the curve of the horizon, the wind in the leaves, the cry of a bird enregister complex impressions within us. Then suddenly, without any deliberate consent on our part, one of these memories issues forth to express itself in the language of music.

In other words, here is the mysterious power of the imagination. I would deny this explanation and the importance of the imagination. It is a device used to explain away that which is difficult to understand. Collingwood writes that by creating an imaginative experience or activity, we express our emotions, and that this is art. ('Creating' refers to a productive activity which is not technical in character. 'Imagination' is not private, nor is it make-believe.)

You cannot divorce planning from art, nor can you make imagination the final explanation. Stravinsky says that music is a phenomenon of speculation. The mind moves in an abstract realm to give shape to something concrete. Creation is a chain of discoveries which in turn causes emotion. The discoveries result from intense concentration, work, and planning. Call the discoveries "accidents" if you like, but this is a peculiar use of the word, for these "accidents" are sought for and planned. Inspiration for Stravinsky is secondary.

Why else are child-composers more rare than child-performers? Children are known for their vivid and active imaginations. According to Collingwood's theory they ought to be prolific composers. But they are not. Their task is difficult because young composers have (Wallace, The Musical Faculty, page 77): "to exercise faculties entirely different from those which are essential to the performer. He has to fix his attention upon the sounds that he is writing, and to think how they may be most effectively combined." This is why an early creative gift may not develop. If it does develop, it may be lost when the child matures. Wallace accounts for this by saying that the child's power of concentration was more an instinct (which may be lost) than a deliberate mental effort.¹ And this has brought us back again to the fact that composition demands a tremendous mental effort and that the composer does not work in a vacuum. He considers

1. When a composer shows a precocious maturity (Wallace, The Musical Faculty, page 56): "Music in such cases is self-centred and self-contained. It is a manner of thinking in itself, unrelated to and uninfluenced by any outward circumstances or other trains of thought. It does not attempt to illustrate or suggest an idea which can be expressed by other means: it depends solely upon its own content, and grows and expands from within itself." This type of composer is able to write works intuitively and without much technical instruction - but he undergoes little development and his later works rarely differ much from his earlier works in style.

and is considered by others. The performance is important to the composer as well as the audience because for most people a musical score is "unreadable."

Exactly how does the written score relate to composition? What is its importance? Collingwood discusses this question and draws an analogy with the building of a bridge. The plans for a bridge can be in the artist's mind. The specifications go on paper. The real bridge must be in steel, etc. So it is with music.

Making the plan is creating. Imposing that plan on matter is fabricating. The composer may sing or write his tune - publish it for others - but what is written on music paper is not the tune. It is the specifications for the tune. It is something which, when intelligently studied, will allow others to have the tune in their heads. The relation of the tune to notation is not like the plan to the bridge; it is like the plan to the specifications and drawings; for these, too, do not embody the plan as the bridge embodies it, they are a notation which the unembodied plan can be reconstructed in the mind of him who studies them.

This analogy makes sense to me. It is normal for the artist to communicate his experience to other people, and he does so by that which is bodily and perceptible. This is the work of art. According to Collingwood the artist externalizes because the experience itself develops and defines itself in his mind as he works. "I paint the mountain in order

to see it." I think that this last ought to read:
"I paint the mountain in order to see how I see it."
In order to see a mountain one need but look at it.
In order to improve one's observations or check upon
them one could list or paint what is seen. But if I
paint the mountain, I now know how I see it. I
may use much yellow, and someone may comment upon this.
"You have used more yellow than I would." "That is
how I see it," I would answer. Why does one person
see something differently from another? This probably
relates to our discussion in a previous chapter on
the fact that people differ themselves, and their
emotions differ. Our experiences are different. And so
we see things differently.

How important are the composer's experiences
and what part do they play in his compositions?

Gordon Jacob believes that a work of art is no
doubt the result of experiences which its creator has
had but do not need to be those which he has at the
time of writing it. (Jacob, The Composer and His Art,
page 90):

Some composers have confessed that they
have produced their happiest and most
cheerful music when they themselves were
most miserable, and vice versa. The affect
of the smiles and blows of fate is thus
seemingly one of delayed action. An actor
can stimulate by his art emotions which he
does not actually feel at the moment.

(We discussed this in regard to Beethoven's will.) The actor
may be very happy and yet must concentrate upon a tragic

part. And we have the reverse case in the example of the 'heart-broken clown.'

Some might argue against the importance of the composer's experiences by citing an instance like Wagner and ideal love. In spite of many and varied amorous adventures, Wagner declared that he had never experienced ideal love. Yet he wanted to portray it, and did so with convincing truthfulness, in "Tristan and Isolde." Yet the fact that he knew about 'ideal love' proved that he had read about it or heard about it - even if he had not experienced it directly. How many of us have experienced it? Yet can we not recognize it in a play? (This reminds me of my amusement at very 'proper ladies' who become too shocked at profanity. They would have no cause for any reaction, if the words were entirely unfamiliar!)

John Dewey in Art as Experience gives an intelligent account of the act of expression and how it relates to experience.

The cry of the infant may be expressive to nurse or mother but not be an act of expression to the baby. The cry is expressive to mother because it tells something about the state of the child. But the child does something directly which is no more expressive than breathing or sneezing (which may be expressive on reflective interpretation.)

Expression demands inner turmoil. To discharge is to dismiss. To express is to carry forward in development, to work out to completion.

Juice comes when grapes are expressed in the wine press. (Page 65):

...the expression of the self in and through a medium, constituting the work of art, is itself a prolonged interaction of something issuing from the self with objective conditions, a process in which both of them acquire a form and order they did not at first possess.

(Page 67):

Emotion is to or from or about something objective, whether in fact or in idea.

(Page 69):

In the development of an expressive act, emotion operates like a magnet drawing to itself appropriate material: appropriate because it has an experienced emotional affinity for the state of mind already moving.

Freshness equals the spontaneous in art.

(Page 71):

Each of us assimilates into himself something of the values and meanings contained in past experiences. But we do so in different degrees and at differing levels of self-hood. Somethings sink deep, others stay on the surface and are easily displaced... Things which we have most completely made a part of ourselves, that we have assimilated to compose our personality and not merely retained as incidents, cease to have a separate conscious existence. Some occasion,

be it what it may, stirs the personality that has been thus formed. Then comes the need for expression. What is expressed will be neither the past events that have exercised their shaping influence nor yet the literal existing occasion. It will be...an intimate union of the features of present existence with the values that past experiences have incorporated in the personality. Immediacy and individuality, the traits that mark concrete existence, come from the present occasion; meaning, substance, content, from what is embedded in the self from the past.

(Page 76):

Transformation changes the character of the original emotion.

(Page 77):

Expression is the clarification of turbid emotion.

For Dewey art is the direction of greater order and unity. He says that it is the individual contribution which makes the object something new. The materials of the art object come from the public world. They become new and unique, owing to the personal medium through which they have passed.

Thus to conclude, whether a composition is good or not will depend upon its criteria as explained in the theory put forward by Helen Knight. Composers work differently, but all must concentrate upon the coordination of the elements with which they deal. Music has no mysterious element (such as a peculiar type of expression brought forth by means of the imagination.)

Past experiences determine how one thinks, and how one thinks will determine in part how one composes.

This now leads us into a consideration of the performer, the interpreter upon whom the composer must depend for the presentation of his work to an audience. The composer, unlike the painter, does not make an object which the public sees immediately. The composer puts the plans of his music on paper. It is the performer with the proper training who can 'fabricate' these plans. There is room for greater inaccuracy than in fabricating a bridge, for musical notation is not as exact as the drawings of plans. "Forte" means "loud," but the performer does not know how loud he is suppose to play. We can measure tempo, but even this becomes inexact when "rubato" (give-and-take) is indicated. Yet a sympathetic performer will try to recreate the composer's "idea." He will do so even though the indications are not mathematically exact.

His performance is like the bridge itself. As some people will accept the bridge, cross it, admire it, investigate it (whether ever to build their own bridge or not), criticise it, copy it (for better or worse), or improve upon it, so the musical audience will accept, admire, criticise, analyse, or try to improve upon the performance.

A musician puts down his "idea." The more sympathetic composer may understand and interpret the 'shades' and gradations of tone-color, 'expressiveness,' and 'meaning,' better than a 'foreign' performer. Perhaps, had he tried, the sympathetic performer would have written in a similar fashion.

Thus when Wagner hugs Liszt and says "my second self" we can infer that Liszt, completely sympathetic, understood to an amazing extent "what the composer heard."

PART IV: PERFORMERS

Performers cannot avoid re-creating the intrinsic proportions of a musical form; they make the listener feel how a performance is for a composition what a precious crystal goblet is for an exquisite wine: the wine's quality remains unchanged, but its color and bouquet unfold in all their splendor.

Paul Hindemith: A Composer's World,
Page 166.

The legend of the performer describes an effulgence. While the composer, a poor recluse, works quietly and unnoticed in some hidden place, the performer, a dashing magician, flashes miracles of superb technique and powerful interpretations for a delighted and applauding audience. He is expected to be "colorful" (ie. impulsive, irresponsible, bad mannered, lacking self-control, or possessing disordered habits.) Thrilled ladies explain the peculiar behavior of this "so-different" individual with the romantic words, "artistic temperament."¹

But alas! while the ladies forgive and adore him, the critics mistreat him, and composers are jealous of his popularity. Even when he is appreciated, it may be a sentimental appreciation or on account of qualities of his personality or technical dexterity. He may even be rated as (Hindemith, A Composer's World, page 129): "a low-grade medium of transmitting music, a contrivance to produce tones; a fellow full of vanity, jealousy, and misconduct, and totally unable to apprehend either music or his role in reproducing it."

1. William Wallace in The Musical Faculty rises to the temperamental artist's defence when he says that we cannot justly blame the artist if "an inoffensive aloofness and isolation are the consequences of his being driven in upon himself." (!)

Hindemith quotes Guido of Arezzo who lived about the year 1000 and who wrote: "In our time the silliest of all men are the singers." Arnulf of San Gilleno, who lived during the 14th century, agreed; "There are singers who have neither talent nor knowledge, but only vanity." Yet Hindemith pointed out, "For others he is the almost superhuman being who, in the wings of his divine talent, carries us into heavenly regions, who ranks as high as the man who creates music, and sometimes even higher, since he 'improvises over given chorale melodies,' while the ordinary professional composer has to follow the slow and cumbersome procedure of figuring out his music on paper."

What is the real importance of the performer (apart, of course, from the sheerly practical point that he provides for most people the only way of 'getting' the work of art)? Is he merely a machine to transmit the sounds which a composer has noted on paper?

Consider the child-performer who is incapable of understanding the gamut of emotions that any sensitive adult has experienced. He is the most machine-like of the various types of performers in that he is the least likely to have developed a strong personality or ideas which he could infuse into a musical performance. Yet his technique is his own, and audiences have marvelled at the dexterity that a prodigy develops. (William Wallace, *The Musical Faculty*, page 63):

The child of 11 who plays The Brahms Violin Concerto in public cannot be aided by anyone: the effort of memory and technique are absolutely his own: and he has before him forty minutes of intense concentration.¹

But the fault against the playing of children is that they play like children. Since a child cannot have experience enough to convey true emotion, he copies. It is the adult artist who (Wallace, The Musical Faculty, page 80): "puts into his work his personality, his intimate thoughts, his deep knowledge, and whether we agree with his reading or not, we feel that it is something more than a superficial and conscientious regard for the composer's indications and nuances."

Liszt, impressed by Paganini's prodigious technique, perceived that (de Pourtales, Liszt, page 41): "form proclaims itself in vain; it is nothing unless the soul speaks." Thus he wrote that (de Pourtales, page 139):

1. His skill is accounted for by the fact that the prodigy has a highly receptive and sensitive musical faculty, one that seems to be largely unconscious. (Wallace, The Musical Faculty, pages 76-77): "He does not realize the magnitude of his performance, and consequently is not deterred by the obstacles which in older people would give rise to anxiety and nervousness. We might say almost that the will - the centers of volition in the brain - are suspended, and that the act of performing is mainly reflex, in a large measure external to, and independent of, direct thought and concentration."

"The true task of the orchestral conductor consisted not merely in managing the baton like an automaton, but in feeling and penetrating works with intelligence 'and embracing all hearts in a sort of communion of the beautiful, the grand, and the true, of art and poetry.'"¹

All performers do interpret their music, for, as I have stated before, musical notation is inexact. The question is ought performers, as Liszt believes, to interpret beyond the least possible degree? How much freedom ought they to have? What is their task?

Let us consider the pianist as primarily a technician. The legend which we mentioned at the beginning of this chapter describes him as an extrovert in the spotlights. But what is forgotten behind the glamorous exhibitions of the performer are the long periods of solitude spent in studying the works of others, in practising, and in dealing with abstractions. He is a rather complex personality in that he spends much time alone and yet seeks attention. I cannot believe that such a type would be content to act as

1. Rubinstein was considered to be very careful about his interpretations. He possessed (Lyle, Rachmaninoff, page 35): "incomparable technique," but he infused "a profound, rarefied spiritual quality into his interpretations." If he did not like a performance he would repeat a work in total or part as he did during a concert with the finale of Chopin's B minor Sonata.

a mechanical means to express another man's personality when his own is probably equally complex and colorful, but let us continue.

The performer is a musician who has a tremendous capacity for hard work. Liszt and Rubinstein led strenuous lives, for rest to them was mental stimulus in another form. The pianist usually works an eight hour day. He is driven by demanding teachers who sometimes must tear him down in order to build him up. (Stories are told of Liszt as a child in tears and frustrated because he was not allowed to do poor work. He was made to repeat passages until they were perfect.) He must develop an irreproachable technique. Hindemith says (A Composer's World, page 103):

Among all the participants in the creation, distribution, and reception of music the individual with the keenest sense of the technique vested in a piece of music is always the performer.

He explains why:

The impeccable technique of a masterpiece he transmits will be the most valuable stimulus for his own technique of re-creation: his performance will be carried along by the composition's perfection; his craving for the listener's satisfaction will most readily be crowned with success. Since, on the other hand, technical imperfections of a piece either prevent the performer from soliciting the listener's satisfaction or force him to cover by his own re-creative power the weaknesses the composer's inability has exposed, he is the one who suffers first and has to pay most dearly

for others' faults. No wonder, then, that ordinarily he develops a judgment for technical quality which may at times appear biased, short-sighted, and directed by his own selfish purposes, but which in its uninhibited relation to practical demands is more realistic than the judgment of either the composer or the listener. The composer, busy computing the structural material, frequently loses direct contact with the effects his piece will release; and the listener is not interested in the technical arrangement of the dishes served as long as he derives any aesthetic satisfaction from consuming them.

In a discussion on technique, William Wallace referred to the fact that some pianists read books while practising technical exercises and concluded THAT (The Musical Faculty, page 118): "The muscular movement seems to be independent of conscious thought, and even during a public performance they become oblivious not only of their surroundings but also of their task."

This amazed me. I have known of no pianists who read while practising. I could imagine someone doing so while using a silent keyboard; but exercises demand evenness, and the only way that the pianist knows whether he is playing correctly or not is to listen ^{HIMSELF} to what he is doing. Nor have I ever heard of a performer who went into a trance during a performance. I do know of one (somewhat affected) dancer who once said that if you were to approach her while she was working and ask her her name, she would be unable to respond. Forgive me, her dancing looked like it!

If an artist is impulsive, irresponsible, and undisciplined in his personality, he certainly cannot be these things in his work. He must be painstaking, and he must be able to exert self-discipline and restraint.

It is true, as our legendary description depicts, that the performer is an exhibitionist. He must be able to win his audience. He has to compete against other personalities for the audience's attention and approbation. Many would describe this process as a cut-throat business at best.¹ But if a man is content to spend eight hours alone at a piano, is it not odd that he is also willing to undergo the nervous strain of performing before large and sometimes hostile audiences? Is not our performer then a little more complex a personality than would at first appear? Now Paul Hindemith says that a performer disappears behind his music, and that this is the greatest tragedy of being a performer. (A Composer's World, page 144):

The better the performer becomes, the more he has doubts, distrust, and desperation. The listener is not concerned with these. He asks the artist to be perfect. Give me images of emotion... But when the artist

1. Galton said that he found it impossible to obtain a list of first class musicians that command general approval for (Galton, Hereditary Genius, 1869, page 260 - as quoted by Wallace, The Musical Faculty, page 137): "there is excessive jealousy in the musical world, fostered no doubt by the dependence of musicians upon public caprice for their professional advancement." Schools and individuals disparage others, and biographers prefer their heroes.

succeeds in bringing the listener to his moral goal, he himself suddenly loses all importance. The listener's satisfaction is exclusively his own; he was given what could be given to him, and he received it emotionally and intellectually with an open mind. The artist, in turn, had to be the giver, and the other's moment of highest satisfaction was the moment of his greatest loss. His duty was merely to reproduce a composition without any disturbing individualistic admixture, so as to prepare for the listener the perfect ground for his mental collaboration. This fact, namely to spend a life's work and, again and again, your heart's devotion and your mind's ambition in performances, with conviction that you did your best only when you and your work disappeared behind the piece performed, gone and forgotten the moment you climbed to the highest summit of perfection and self-denial - this seems to me the essential tragedy in the performer's existence.

We have returned to the magician idea with a disappearing performer! But does it seem likely that a man who does spend so much time alone, would plan to disappear once he had struggled into the public's eye? Hindemith credits the artist with greater selflessness than I would. No one with an adequate degree of sanity, would go through the extensive training, nervous tension, and absolute fright that some performers do if he planned to disappear as soon as he arrived on stage! A sophisticated listener is allowed to close his eyes and concentrate upon the music alone - but the artist is there behind every note

that is heard. And it is because of the performer's awareness of his "there-ness", of pride in himself, of his responsibility to his audience, and of his love for music that we receive the superb performances that we do.¹ If there is any tragedy in the performer's life, it is probably the cause of the unrelenting force which keeps him at his piano for such long hours and which in turn demands self-sacrifice on his part. His pain comes from bad notices - not at the moment when he achieves his greatest audience attention. On the contrary that is the one moment that makes all the struggles worthwhile and all the pain and disappointments disappear. It is as though the performer had agreed to this: I will bother you so little of the time if you will but grant me these few moments of glory when I do appear!

Paul Hindemith tells ^{us} that the worst blow the admirers of the hammer keyboard ever received was (A Composer's World, page 164): "the discovery of physicists that in the sound tracks of an oscillator no difference can be seen between tones produced by the adept touch of a great artist's hand and those stemming

1. Hindemith, A Composer's World, page 134: "There is no doubt that our modern performers have developed their technical skill far beyond any goal imagined in earlier times. Two hundred years ago violinists hardly knew how to reach tones higher than those in the so-called third position." (Today they reach the 12th.)

from manipulation with an umbrella," but he himself adds that one tone is not music. "The tones released by the keyboard receive musical value only if brought into temporal and spatial relations with each other. Then the infinitely subtle gradation in the application of pressure, the never-ceasing interplay of minutest dynamic hues and temporal length proportions, all the bewitching attractions of good piano playing - only the artist can produce them convincingly."

This passage, to my way of thinking, argues for the idea that the artist is more than a machine. He develops himself from within. Technique can be given to him, but interpretation and insight cannot, and it is these last two things which are the "bewitching attractions of good piano playing."

When Stravinsky objects to interpretation on the part of the performer, when he says (Chronical of My Life, page 60): "It is a source of vanity inevitably leading to the most ridiculous megalomania," he is guilty of insulting the intelligence of the performer and of being too self-interested to share the glory and the credit with a performer. This attitude is best illustrated in his statement that music should be transmitted (Ibid, page 126): "because interpretation reveals the personality of the interpreter rather than that of the author." (Stravinsky, suppose the performer has the more interesting or better personality of the two?)

Stravinsky states explicitly in his book that he has tried to avoid all "confessions." He has, but in so doing, he foolishly presents a rather cold personality. There is no human warmth to attract this audience anyway! Perhaps his music does him more justice. To be fair to him, Stravinsky is consistent. He also objects to any interpretative explanations of a musical composition. Sometimes the interpretation may be a mistaken one from the composer's point of view. In his Poetics of Music he says that his "Rite of Spring" was thought to be a reflection of the revolutionary times. He claims that he did not intend it to be revolutionary at all!¹ Revolution means chaos, and to him art is the opposite of chaos, for the purpose of music is to give an order to things - especially between man and time. Alas, Stravinsky, why not between man and man - especially between composer and performer? Perhaps then you would have less cause to resent the interpreter!

Absolute accordance with the composer's wishes is impossible in a performance as Debussy wrote in *Musica*, January, 1908. He said that the stage realization

1. Yet for the death of Rimsky-Korsakov, he composed *Chant Funebre*. The score was lost, and Stravinsky says that he cannot remember the music but that he can the idea (Chronical of My Life, page 45): "Which was that all the solo instruments of the orchestra filed past the tomb of the master in succession, each laying down its own melody as its wreath against a deep background of tremolo murmurings..." Surely this story would have helped an interpreter?

of a work of art (O. Thompson, Debussy, page 141):

no matter how beautiful, always is at variance with the inner vision...

Consider the charming existence in which you and your characters have lived together for so long; when sometimes they seemed about to rise, in tangible form, from your manuscript's silent pages! If you are bewildered when you behold them come to life through intervention of this or that artist, is it any wonder? Something like fear is experienced. They are like phantoms; one scarcely dares to address them... Nothing remains of the old dream. Another's mind is interposed between you and it...

The key sentence in Debussy's thoughts above is "Another's mind is interposed between you and it." He did not say another's hands upon the piano. Even Stravinsky, who seems to deplore an independent mind in his performers, admits that no matter how carefully he makes notations (and I would wager that Stravinsky is most painstaking), there are some things that cannot be noted. These things depend on the talent of the performer, and so he wants fidelity and sympathy in his artists.¹

1. Stravinsky feels that there are more bad interpreters today (in musical careers) than there are good ones. He cites an Italian proverb that makes a play on words and equates translation with betrayal. For him interpretation should be a translation, i.e., a transmission of the composer's intension. He advises performers that their strength and success lie in restraint. If a composer writes for a small number of performers, then modern people with more resources at their command ought not to hire a large orchestra and a chorus of 1000.

How much license does the performer have in interpretation? Consider a party which took place at Nohant in June, 1843. It was at George Sand's place in the country, and among the guests were Chopin, Liszt, and (Karasowski, Chopin, pages 308, 309, 310): "the celebrated Pauline Viardot-Garcia, whose incomparable power of ideal expression made her the best interpreter of Chopin's Polish songs."

One evening when they were all assembled in the salon, Liszt played one of Chopin's nocturnes, to which he took the liberty of adding some embellishments. Chopin's delicate intellectual face, which still bore the traces of recent illness, looked disturbed; at last he could not control himself any longer, and in that tone of sang-froid which he sometimes assumed he said, 'I beg you, my dear friend, when you do me the honor of playing my compositions, to play them as they are written or else not at all.' 'Play it yourself, then,' said Liszt, rising from the piano, rather piqued. 'With pleasure,' answered Chopin. At that moment a moth fell into the lamp and extinguished it. They were going to light it when Chopin cried, 'No, put out all the lamps, the moonlight is quite enough.' Then he began to improvise and played for nearly an hour. And what an improvisation it was! Description would be impossible, for the feelings awakened by Chopin's magic fingers are not transferable into words.

When he left the piano his audience were in tears; Liszt was deeply affected, and said to Chopin, as he embraced him, 'Yes, my friend, you were right; works like yours

ought not to be meddled with; other people's alterations only spoil them. You are a true poet.

...Some days afterwards (writes Charles Rollinat, in Le Temps,) we were once more the guests of George Sand. Liszt asked Chopin to play... He consented. Liszt then desired the lights to be put out and the curtains drawn that it might be perfectly dark. This was done, and just as Chopin was sitting down to the piano Liszt whispered something to him and took his place. Chopin seated himself in the nearest arm-chair not dreaming of his friend's intention. Liszt immediately began to improvise in the same manner as Chopin had done on the former evening, and so faithfully copied both sentiment and style that the deception was perfect. The same signs of emotion were again perceptible among the audience, and just as the feeling reached its height, Liszt lighted the candles on the piano. A general cry of astonishment echoed through the room. 'What, it is you!'' 'As you see,' said Liszt, with a laugh. 'But we made sure it was Chopin playing,' rejoined the company.

(Someone else has added to the story that at the conclusion Liszt said to Chopin: 'Now I have been Chopin. Can Chopin also be Liszt?')

Liszt and Chopin were both composers and performers, but Liszt was the better performer as Chopin was the better composer. Yet a distinguished company was fooled when the performer 'improvised' (composed) in a manner similar to that of a composer who could not have been better known to them! I feel that this story

illustrates very well the equality of the importance of the performer and the composer, and illustrates how much license the performer should have in interpretation: as much as he needs to give us a valuable musical experience but without re-writing the composer's manuscript.

When the newspaper critic, Harold Hobson, wrote about the play, Timon of Athens, at the Old Vic, he digressed in his article to discuss this question. He said that Helen Hayes, a talented actress, walks on stage and always places her feet (metaphorically speaking) on the chalk marks. But he adds that genius does not need such marks - eg. Peggy Ashcroft, Edith Evans, Gielgud, Olivier, and Ralph Richardson.

In Timon of Athens, Hobson writes that the acting of Ralph Richardson by some will be called a flagrant betrayal of the intentions of the author- "but I say it's creative acting of the highest kind in which the actor as artist presents to the world his own vision and thereby enriches it."¹

1. When the American actor, John Barrymore, known for his Hamlet, told his daughter how to act, he said that he always played any character as though it had been written for him especially and had never been acted before.

I would agree that an actor has a right to perform "creative acting" - but he must stick to his job of acting and should not try to re-write the play.

When Shakespeare wrote Hamlet, he visualized a young man. This is implicit in the story. If a producer cast a seventy-year old man in the part, or a young actor, attempting to be different, played Hamlet too old, both would not only betray the intentions of the author but would be overstepping their own roles. A producer and an actor are not writers. They are attempting to do something else than their job when they take it upon themselves to rewrite the play.

When an author or a composer has not made his intentions clear, a performer must use his own judgment to a greater extent than usual. But if a composer has not indicated any dynamic markings in a composition, he has not completed his work. It is not the performer's task to fill in or to change any of the composer's markings. What the performer must do is find the composer's intentions and reproduce these with the utmost conviction. (However, the fact that another mind is involved means that the composer's exact "idea" cannot be realized in a perfect manner.)

It is true that some performers are more sympathetic towards particular composers (as some actors prefer particular plays or parts in plays). They understand

the mood or spirit of these composers better than others.¹

Does this sympathy between composer and performer make the one a "confidant" or "mouthpiece" of the other as the philosophers Rousseau, Kierkegaard, Croce, and Langer and the music critics Marpurg, Hausegger, and Riemann all believe? Herbert Hughes said that Chopin¹¹ a letter to Titus said:

(Lives of the Great Composers, page 62): "How often do I tell my piano all that I should like to tell to you."

Does this mean that Chopin put messages in his music which a sympathetic performer could understand?

I do not think so. Chopin could have been speaking figuratively, or he could have "confided" in his

1. La Mara wrote in "Musickalische Studienkopfe" Leipzig, 1868, that a correct performance of Chopin's work was rare. One must be able to sympathize with the misfortunes of the Poles and the melancholy which is characteristic of the whole nation.

The story is told that Liszt, Chopin, and Hiller entered upon a discussion on national music. Chopin declared that no one who had not been in Poland and (Karasowski, Chopin, page 319): "inhaled the perfume of its meadows could have any true sympathy with its folk-songs." The three men agreed upon a test, the playing of the mazurka, "Poland is Not Lost Yet." Each gave a different interpretation, but it was Chopin whom both Liszt and Hiller admitted far surpassed them in comprehending the spirit of the mazurka.

piano during an improvisation rather than when he was busy composing. "Confidant" implies conversation and a specific message, which in a previous chapter I have tried to show cannot occur in music.

However, it cannot be denied that composers and performers have influenced each other. This is seen in the development of notation and harmony. Previous to the invention of notation, singers gave a "parrot-like imitation" of other performers' accomplishments, and (Hindemith, A Composer's World, page 131 and 132):

such secondhand activity was neither fit to strengthen the mental powers of the performer nor did it place him on a high rung in the ladder of society's esteem.

But, notation and harmony developed the composer's craft.

Once used to these new conditions, performers started inventing new technical devices and virtuoso's tricks of their own which in turn again influenced the composers' technique. The immediate effect of all this was a revaluation of the performer and his work. From now on, the composer was dependent on the performer...

In our own times performers outnumber composers to a degree never known before, and their abilities, attitudes, and tastes are perhaps the strongest power in determining

It is conceivable that a pianist could develop such speed where rate has not been made explicit by the composer that what he played became unimportant. The listener only hears and marvels at the how and not at the what. People would wonder at this unusual performer because he has surprised them, but when the amazement wears off (and other performers give the same degree of skill), the what must come into its own importance again.

Of the two, who contributes the most, the composer or the performer?

Joseph Elsner, teacher of composition to Chopin, has expressed the common view of the greater importance of the composer than the performer in a letter to Chopin. (Karasowski, Chopin, pages 234 and 235):

Warsaw, Nov. 27, 1831

...The playing of any instrument be it ever so perfect, like that of Paganini on the violin, or Kalkbrenner on the piano - is, with all its charm, only the means, not the end of the tone-art. The achievements of Mozart and Beethoven as pianists have long been forgotten and their pianoforte compositions, although undoubtedly classic works, must give way to the diversified, artistic treatment of that instrument by the modern school. But their other works, not written for one particular instrument, the operas, symphonies, quartets, etc. will not only continue to live, but will, perhaps, remain unequalled by anything in the present day.

Elsner wrote this letter to advise Chopin to compose bigger works. Chopin had asked him whether he thought that another three years piano study under Kalkbrenner would be beneficial to his career. It is well that Chopin took Elsner's advice in concentrating upon composing, but it is well that he confined himself to the piano, contrary to Elsner's advice, to become the "father of modern piano music." However, there are inaccuracies in Elsner's letter. The skill of Paganini and Mozart as performers is still talked about today. One would have a rare thing in the possession of a recording of their playing or for that matter, a film showing the dancing of Pavlova or Nijinski! Nor has the pianoforte compositions of Beethoven and Mozart died as Elsner predicted. It is interesting that Chopin, more than they, confined himself to one instrument.

Performers who wished to become composers have expressed themselves in such a way as to augment the position of the composer. Lyle reported that Rachmaninoff thought (Lyle, Rachmaninoff, page 37): "The highest of all offices in music: the vocation of the creative artist." Both Liszt and his father wanted him to study at the Paris Conservatory because (de Pourtales, Liszt, page 25): "virtuosity no longer seemed to them anything but the first stage on the road of the masters."

The composer's task seems higher and somewhat mysterious because (Wallace, The Musical Faculty, pages 135 - 137):

"The composer's faculty is one that he cannot impart to his son, no matter what the environment is, for he works in silence." This is in contrast to the performer's home in which music is a stimulus to the children who hear it. (This is always so when one member of the family practices daily.)

Also, performers who become dissatisfied with their work add to this feeling that the composer's work is more worthy (Hindemith, A Composer's World, page 140):

The time comes in every serious performer's life, when he feels that it cannot be the final purpose of his existence to be some elevated form of public jester, that there must be some higher aim than a lifelong concentration on the question of how to hit the right tone at the right time with the proper strength.

Liszt wrote to Lamennais (de Pourtales, Liszt, page 75): "Will the hour for devotion and virile action never come? Am I condemned without remission to this trade of buffoon and amuser of drawing rooms?" He had to choose between being a composer and a virtuoso. To the Grand Duke Karl Alexander of Saxony he wrote: (Ibid, page 112): "The aim that is above and beyond everything important to me at present is to conquer the theater by my thought, as I have conquered it during these last six years by my personality as an

artist."¹

Even though performers themselves belittle their jobs, I hope to show in the next chapter that they are being unfair to themselves and to their fellow artists. Chopin at least did not tear down the performer. He says that it was a material advantage to a musician to be a performer as well as a composer - and probably would agree that it would be a help musically speaking. In a letter from Paris on Dec. 14, 1831 he wrote:

Many young and very talented pupils of the Parisian Conservatoire are waiting with their hands in their pockets for the performance of their operas, symphonies, and cantatas, which hitherto only Lesueur and Cherubini have seen on paper... And when, like Thos. Nidecki, at the Leopoldstadter Theatre in Vienna, a composer is fortunate enough to obtain a performance, he reaps but little benefit from it, even when, as in this case, the work is a good one. Meyerbeer, too, after he had been famous in the musical world for ten years, stayed three years in Paris waiting, working, and spending money, before he succeeded in bringing out his "Robert le Diable," which has now made such a furor...

In my opinion, the composer who can perform his works himself is better off...

1. But the fact that he was such a popular performer proved a hindrance to him. (Ibid: page 229):
"Franz had suspected for many years that his celebrity was an obstacle to his reputation. 'As long as people applaud me as a pianist they will criticise me as a composer.'"

In an earlier letter from Vienna on August 8, 1829 he tells of an experience which probably helped him to develop this view. W. Wurfel, conductor, advised him to give a recital. Wurfel said to him that "if you have composed anything new, and want to create a sensation, you must play it yourself." Chopin wrote, "I ought to appear in the two-fold capacity of pianist and composer, and must not think too modestly of myself."

Perhaps some jealousy has arisen between composers and performers because the one cannot do what the other does well. There are many composers who are not performers.

For an example, Robert Schumann dislocated his third finger in 1833 which meant that he would never be a concert-artist nor the best player of his own piano works. But also, he lacked the temperament for performance. He showed lack of command and would lose respect when he attempted to conduct an orchestra or choral group. He was timid during rehearsals and was too absent-minded. He was uncommunicative and unobservant. In 1853 he began to think that all tempi were too fast. He was finally asked to be replaced.

But the ability to conduct seems to be as rare - if not more so - than the ability to play an instrument. This fact probably is owing to the necessity to be able to command others as well as to have a knowledge of several instruments. Brahms was no conductor.

(Lives of the Great Composers, vol. 3, page 23):

There was in Vienna besides the Singakademie a rival organization, the Singverein, whose

conductor, Johann Herbeck, appears to have been a master of his craft. A performance of Bach's "Christmas Oratorio" under Brahms by the Singakademie met with lukewarm approval, while a performance of the "St. John Passion" by the Singverein under Herbeck made a profound impression; Brahms, unconcerned at first, gave concerts of his own compositions, where he had the field to himself, but his friends were obviously alarmed. In the end he himself found that conducting was not his vocation. In May, 1863, the Singakademie re-engaged him for a term of three years; a few months later he sent in his resignation, which was accepted.

Debussy too had trouble when he tried conducting.

When he presented his own La Mer, O. Thompson wrote:

(Debussy, page 158):

No one could question that Debussy's treatment of his own work was 'authoritative,' in so far as he had the technique and the command of his ensemble to communicate what he had in mind. But, as he himself was to concede, he had little talent for orchestral leadership. Both the 1905 performance with Camille Chevillard as conductor and 1908, in which Debussy conducted at Concerts Colonne, met a divided reception.

M.D. Calvocoressi in Guide Musical was favorable. Pierre Lalo in Le Temps said, "I neither hear, nor see, nor feel the sea." Gaston Carrand said the same.

In the early days composer and performer were one person, but in Berlioz and Wagner's time this was not so. Both of them were indifferent pianists. They concentrated upon composition and did not take part in public performances except as conductors of their own works. Other "pure" composers were Verdi

and those who wrote for the stage.

In 1914 William Wallace wrote (The Musical Faculty, page 146):

The younger generation of composers is showing not only a high degree of proficiency in composition, but also a masterly command of an instrument, thus testifying to the further development of the musical faculty. It remains to be seen whether, with the present trend of orchestral music, the dual facility can be equally sustained, or one branch alone cultivated.

Rachmaninoff seemed to have an equal talent for composing and performing, but he found that the two conflicted in regard to time. He left composing for two years to work up a large repertoire for piano concerts. A friend who met him at the end of the time asked him if he had not composed at all. "Yes," he answered, "A cadenza to one of the Liszt Hungarian Rhapsodies!" When he did compose, he sought solitude.

The two activities of composing and performing tend more to interfere with each other than help each other when they are accomplished by one man. For this reason, even if a man excels at both equally, he will prefer and devote more time to the one rather than to the other.

An answer might be, composers, record your performances if you lack the time to go on extensive concert-tours. But an objection to this was given by Roger Sessions

in his book, The Musical Experience. He says that music must be 'alive.' It loses interest in mechanical reproduction. A composer indicates 'essential contours' of music with dynamic indications but allows the interpreter 'some' freedom. The performer gives 'fresh energy' to a composition.

Rachmaninoff objected to the radio, for he felt that the result was inartistic. It could not give a true impression of the sounds produced; even at its best a radio performance is tonally untrue. The audience does not pay, and it is apt not to value what it has gotten very cheaply. Owing to cheap receiving sets, unfavorable conditions of the ether, and of controls of transmissions (Lyle reported this in London, 1938), the audience might get a false impression of the artist. Rachmaninoff realized that the radio could give wide advertisement, but if it broadcast a false impression, the advertisement might not be an advantage.

Today, our radio equipment is improved, but even the best recording lacks the atmosphere and intimacy of the concert hall.

Sessions writes that a performance is a single experience. But a composer's intent is expressed in the sum of all his possible performances. A great work stays vital through different interpretations and to different ages and types of people.

And this fact now takes us into the next chapter which deals with collaboration. We will try to define the interrelationship between two artists, each having a task to do, and each having to consider the "other mind involved."

PART V: COLLABORATION

"No man is an island entire in itself,
Every man is a piece of the continent -
A part of the main..."

(Donne: Meditation XVII)

A musical work of art results from the collaboration of composers and performers. As Gordon Jacob points out, although some composers are brilliant performers, most depend upon others for interpretation. And when they do, Collingwood in The Principles of Art (Page 321) wrote: "Every performer is co-author of the work he performs."

The co-authorship of the performer is best seen in an example that Thorburn used in his book, Art and the Unconscious. He illustrates with a dancer. The dancer must use her body, which becomes the medium of expression. She is the interpreter and the medium. (Ibid, page 84): "One half self-revealer, but also half resistant and unplastic individuality." In dealing with the resistant individuality, the composer loses his complete mastery. The interpreter and composer use one medium - but they must link purposes. The choreographer feels himself in the dances, but during the dance itself, the medium obtains a supremacy over the "soul of the poet." The dancer reveals "the poet to himself" as his interpreter. "His material must be what she can do." (The poet of pen and paper has more freedom.)

Have composers ever recognized the "individuality" of performers? Collingwood answers yes. (The Principles of Art, page 321): "When Mozart leaves it to his soloist to improvise the cadenza of a concerto, he is in effect

insisting ~~that~~ the soloist shall be more than a mere executant; he is to be something of a composer, and therefore trained to collaborate intelligently... The minute directions today show distrust... Authors who try to produce a fool-proof text are choosing fools as their collaborators."

A musical work of art is the product of more than one person - or of one person acting in at least two capacities. As Roger Sessions has written, music is a single event in which listener,¹ performer, and composer collaborate and share in three different ways.

The composer deals with the raw material of sound and rhythm (or movement) patterns. The performer re-creates these actually, while the listener, engaged in a sophisticated activity, re-creates them in an imaginary way. The listener and the performer re-experience and re-create a musical thought of the composer and add to it.

Sessions is correct in describing the material of the composer and the task of the performer. The composer works to place a pattern of sound on paper; the performer works to re-create this pattern from paper. The performer is an artist in his own right, working in a

1. I will discuss the listener in my chapter on "The Audience." My opinion is different from Sessions'.

~~xxxx~~ different medium from the composer, but aiming at the same goal - to re-create a work of art by giving a superior performance.

The idea of the collaboration of performer and composer may sound radical to you if you have not considered it before, but it is certainly less extreme than the collaboration purposely or unwittingly done between composer and composer! In The Principles of Art Collingwood pointed out that Beethoven, Handel, and Shakespeare used others' works. (Page 319):

Collaboration between artists has always been the rule. I refer especially to that kind of collaboration in which one artist grafts his own work upon that of another, or (if you wish to be abusive) plagiarizes another's for incorporation in his own.

He says that it is a pity that in the 19th century, plagiarizing became a crime - "owing no doubt to the poverty of ideas in that period." Most of Shakespeare's tragedies and especially Hamlet are adaptations of Holinshed, Lives by Plutarch, or are excerpts from Gesta Romanorum. Handel copied into his own works whole movements by Arne. The Scherzo of Beethoven's C minor Symphony begins by reproducing the Finale of Mozart's G minor, differently barred.

Collingwood of course favors the collaboration between performer and composer. He refers to the building of a cathedral. This is readily seen to be the work of many people. Yet would we not say that

some cathedrals are works of art? Does it really matter how many men were involved? You have to admit that it is the same case with some types of music. A librettist and a musician must collaborate in writing songs and operas! It was said that Debussy wanted to write several operas, but was stopped because his librettist, a drug addict, disappointed him and he could not proceed without him.

The question ^{then arises:} ~~occurs~~ exactly who is involved in the musical enterprise? We know that as the performer must depend to some extent upon agents, managers, ushers, printers, cleaners, etc., so the composer's world is crowded with people.

Johannes Brahms's curious distrust of himself is again and again shown (Lives of the Great Composers, page 17): "by the way in which he announces the completion of a new work and by the way in which he acquiesces in her (Clara Schumann's) criticism."

When G. Faure wrote, his wont was to leave the orchestration for another's hand - sometimes to that of a pupil as with his "Legend of Prometheus." When he sent a Quartet to Roger Ducasse, he asked him to examine it carefully and publish it (Suckling, Faure, page 37): "if it were found worth playing."

Chopin tells of the preparations for a coming concert and the trouble involved:

...had not Paer, Kalkbrenner, and especially Norblin (....), taken the matter in hand, I should have been helpless.

We are indebted to Paganini for the incentive to two of Berlioz's compositions. A gift of money gave Berlioz leisure to compose "Romeo and Juliet Symphony" and "Harold in Italy" was first a nameless symphony with a viola solo in it for Paganini.

Rachmaninoff suffered from creative dullness and melancholia before writing his Second Piano Concerto. A visit to Count Leo Tolstoy in 1899 did not help. Dr. N. Dahl cured his nervous troubles through hypnotic suggestion. Rachmaninoff went to him daily in Moscow from January to April 1900. (Lyle, Rachmaninoff, page 111):

The treatment consisted of the almost ceaseless repetition to him of the words: "You will begin to write your concerto... You will work with great facility... The concerto will be of excellent quality..."

By the beginning of summer, both doctor and patient had great success.

The people involved in these examples were important to the composer's comfort but ~~are~~^{were} not necessary for the production of works of art. The composer certainly could have worked - though perhaps with greater difficulty - without their help.

Could a composer work without thought of or contact with a performer? No. It is true that Liszt heard Todtentanz fifty-one years after it was written, and Wagner waited fifteen years to hear Lohengrin performed, the delay arising from political

troubles; but a composer needs the performer in order to hear the work perfectly. He may play an orchestral score on the piano, but this is not the same thing as listening to an orchestra. This is proved in a story about Rachmaninoff.

He enjoyed writing his First Symphony, in D minor, Op. 13, because the music and ideas came so easily. When Taneyev, his teacher, warned him that it was not good, Rachmaninoff paid no attention. It was to be performed by the Belaiev Russian Symphony Concert in St. Petersburg. He went to the rehearsal.

He was full of confident anticipations until the orchestra started to play. (Lyle, Rachmaninoff, page 97):

Could those sequences of horrible noises be the noble music he had conceived, and imagined orchestrally in his studio in Moscow? ... His dreams of tonal beauty had become the phantasmagoria of a horrible nightmare through which he sat, huddled up, his confidence in his creative powers crumpled in nothingness.

He became afraid because he knew that the public would hear it soon. During the performance he sat on the fire-escape stairs leading to the gallery, and then ran away. He was miserable at the dinner in his honor because everyone was "so kind." He never sent the score to Gutheil "who was far too discreet to mention it."¹

1. But happily with "Aleko" it was a different story. (Ibid, page 89): "He has tasted the delight at full rehearsal of "Aleko" of his hearing his music in the scoring just as he had imagined it."

You might wish to argue that this was a special case, that most composers hear the work in their minds ! Chopin's letter to Titus Woyciechowski (Warsaw, December 27, 1828) would not bear out your protest. Chopin describes Fontana and himself playing his Rondo at Buchholtz's house in order to see how it might sound.

I say 'might,' for the instruments were not tuned alike, and our fingers were stiff, so we could have no adequate impression of the effect of the work.

But it is not only for the composer himself to hear his works that he must depend upon instruments and performers; they are the means by which his works come to life. If a composition is never to be heard, it might just as well not have been written. It is neither art nor non-art. In order to present his works to the public, the composer must depend upon others; and as soon as he does so, he finds responsibilities and restrictions placed upon him.

The composer and performer should never interfere with each other, but each should have a knowledge of the other's medium. Gordon Jacob says (The Composer and His Art, page 103):

The performer should be regarded as a partner in the creation of the work. He can

certainly mar it,¹ though he cannot make it, he can, if necessary, present it in such a way as to persuade the audience that it is a better work than it really is.²

1. The story is told of how Louis Hector Berlioz lost patience with an orchestra in October, 1830, for ruining one of his works. "Sardanapale" was well rehearsed, but (Lives of the Great Composers, vol. 2, page 41): "the horns missed a vital cue, the percussion, relying upon them, were afraid to 'come in' and the whole effect was a failure. The composer was so mortified that he flung the score at the orchestra and created a scandal.

This is in contrast to Rachmaninoff who praised the Philadelphia orchestra under Stokowski because (Lyle, Rachmaninoff, page 193): "They are as one man."

2. When A.E.F. Dickinson wrote about Schumann in Lives of the Great Composers, he criticised the Symphony in B flat as being loosely constructed. (Page 171): "Schumann's themes often begin well but do not lead to anything in particular, so that they make a fussy show of individuality or are too quickly forgotten in a new subject. But with a sympathetic conductor, capable of integrating the struggling episodes and uncouth orchestration as well as of realising the ecstatic intention of the general conception, the symphony can make a striking public appearance, second only to Beethoven and Brahms in its century.

He must, for this to happen, enjoy playing it and this means that the work must be written with full understanding of the medium and appreciation of its effective possibilities... If he writes for orchestra the conductors and players must be made to feel that he understands each instrument's characteristics and has used this knowledge to the best advantage so that his music sounds well from the start of the first rehearsal... In short the work must be carefully and well laid out for all concerned.

What happens if a composer does not follow this advice? Trouble occurs. No composer can work in a vacuum. Chopin in a letter to Titus, Sept. 12, 1829, tells of an unhappy incident which occurred in Vienna owing to an orchestra's lack of confidence in him. The lack of confidence resulted because the work was not "carefully and well laid out for all concerned."

My publisher, Haslinger, represented to me that it would be of advantage to my compositions if I were to appear in Vienna; that my name was as yet unknown, and my music difficult both to play and understand.

...The members of the orchestra looked sourly at me during the rehearsal; they were particularly vexed at my making my debut with new compositions.

... The Variations were a success, but the Rondo, owing to the way in which it was written, went so badly that we were obliged to commence from the beginning twice. I ought to have put the pauses below instead of above. Enough; the gentlemen made such wry faces that I felt very much inclined to announce myself ill in the evening.

Chopin's story ends well, but it is in spite of, not because of, his mistake.

Demar, the manager, noticed the ill-temper of the orchestra, who do not like Wurfel. The latter wished to conduct himself, but the orchestra declined (I don't know why) to play under his lead. Herr Demar advised me to improvise,¹ at which proposal the orchestra stared. I was so much irritated by what had happened that I consented in despair; and who knows whether my miserable mood and strange humor were not the cause of the great success I achieved?

.....

The Vienna newspapers were lavish in their praise. By universal desire I played again the next week, congratulating myself that no one could say now that I was only able to appear once.

1. Wallace in The Musical Faculty wrote (Page 121): "Improvising demands great concentration for while his hands play one musical thought, the performer is mentally determining a series of thoughts that are to follow the one that is being played."

Not only must the composer be careful in offering performers a well laid out piece of work, but he might take some advice from them on how to do it! Gordon Jacob writes that there is (The Composer and His Art, page 104):

the necessity for treating any suggestions a performer may make about technical points, bowing of string parts, dynamic markings and so on, with respect.

A composer who has not had systematic training in piano technique sometimes will play with ease passages in his own compositions which the pure pianist would find awkward... (Wallace, The Musical Faculty, Page 120): "Hence the expression that such and such a work is not written 'pianistically.'"

Gordon Jacob continues:

Where chamber music is concerned much more time is usually available than can be allotted to orchestral rehearsal, and the players consequently get to know a work thoroughly before performing it. That is to say they not only know their own parts but those of their colleagues and may think of some small alteration in the actual music, such as the ending or distribution of parts in a certain passage, which they think would be an improvement. Such suggestions are often of great value in contributing to the effectiveness and playability of the work and should be received sympathetically even if they are not always acted upon. This sort of thing crops up most frequently in concertos. The soloist to whom the first performance has been entrusted will almost certainly have some suggestions to make about the

passagework and figuration in this part, and the composer will be following august precedents in taking heed of such advice. Not only will the effectiveness and brilliance of the solo part be improved but it is only natural that the soloist will feel a proprietary interest in such passages and this will increase his sense of co-operation in a creative enterprise. The result will be seen in added enthusiasm and determination to do all he can for the success of the work.

.....

It is often difficult for a composer to decide which of two or three ways of playing a phrase is best. A player or singer often asks, "Do you want it like this..., or this..." and expects him to make up his mind at once. Curiously enough composers are not always good interpretative artists even where their own music is concerned and it is often the best course, in such circumstances, to enquire which version is most comfortable for, or seems most appropriate to, the player.

.....

Performers often ask the composer to criticize a performance after the concert and to make any suggestions for improvement. Many composers find it very difficult to do this because they do not always hear their work as it actually is but their impressions are mixed up with the ideal sounds which were in their minds when they were writing it. (Thus they are often bad proof-correctors.) Such things may seem strange to the layman, but it has to be admitted that composers are often poor judges of performances of their own works, though to do them justice they are far more likely to think that an

indifferent performance has been good than the other way round.

This quotation has pointed out the wisdom of a collaboration between composer and performer over technical points in a composition. It is well to add, before going on to a consideration of a possible collaboration in regard to interpretation, that a composer is not bound to the performer's word. This is especially true in relation to an innovation.¹ Strong men sometimes clash. The story is told of Chopin that he liked the extended chord and even used a mechanical contrivance as a child to produce special effects. Later he wrote chords which were thought to be

1. When a performer criticises the whole work, the composer must evaluate the criticism for what it is worth. I certainly would not expect him to accept any authority blindly. When Modeste Moussorgsky sent "Night on the Bare Mountain" (the only orchestral work of any magnitude that he ever wrote) to Balakirev, and the conductor criticised it, Moussorgsky wrote to him: Lives of the Great Composers, page 111): "I was hurt by your attitude to my work - which I regard as perfectly satisfactory. It is the first big one with which I come forth. Now this feeling has vanished. But whether you agree to have it performed or not, I refuse to alter the form or the treatment, which correspond exactly to my views and feelings." (It was not performed until after his death.)

(Karasowski, Chopin, page 22): "almost impracticable,¹ but players grew accustomed to them, and now no pianist finds them unsuited to the capacities of the hand." He left the old method to use his own in composing.

But Chopin did not leave the old method without protests from other well known pianists. In 1833 the famous pianist, Moscheles, wrote about Chopin's early works (Karasowski, Chopin, page 262):

I gladly avail myself of a few leisure evening hours to become acquainted with Chopin's Etudes and other works. Their originality and the national coloring of the motives are very charming, but my fingers are constantly stumbling over hard, inartistic, and, to me, incomprehensible modulations, so that the whole often seems too cloying, and unworthy of a man and an accomplished musician.

Later he writes:

I am a sincere admirer of Chopin's originality, he produces the newest and most attractive pianoforte work. But personally, I object to his artificial and often forced modulations; my fingers stick and stumble at such passages, and practise them as I may, I never play them fluently.

Karasowski added (Ibid, page 263): "Although he somewhat modified this opinion in after years, it is indicative of the impression produced on the most celebrated pianists by Chopin's early works."

1. Yet Chopin was considered the best pianist in Warsaw in 1825.

Let us consider collaboration in the presentation and interpretation of a work. As we have already said, the composer's medium is a pattern of sounds and rhythm. The performer's material is a score of notes and rests which indicate the composer's pattern. A work of art is the result of a sympathetic re-creation of the composer's original creation. I have used the term "sympathetic re-creation" because notation is not exact, the performer must use his own talent and judgment in re-creating the pattern, and he will be more "true" to the composer's indications of pattern if he is sympathetic to the way in which the composer writes.

We have an example of such a bond of sympathy, and it is revealed in the letters between Liszt and Wagner. (de Pourtales, Liszt, starting on page 128):

Sir and Dear Friend, -

You know already through Herr von Ziegesar with what ardour, what admiration and ever increasing sympathy, we are studying your Tannhauser. If it is possible for you to come here on the 15th, to be present at the last rehearsal and the performance that will follow, the next day, it will be a true joy for us all.

Feb. 9, 1849

Dear Friend Liszt, -

According to all that I hear, you, after the unprecedented success of your artistic life, have succeeded quite recently in winning another, in no way inferior to the finest

of your former triumphs and probably even surpassing them in more than one respect. Do you think it is impossible to judge this from a distance? Read for yourself. Four years have gone by since my opera Tannhauser was published and not a theater in the world has thought of playing it. And then you came from a great distance, settled in a town that possessed a small court theatre and set to work at once, enabling your friend, who has been so sorely tried, to take one more step forward. Without wasting any time in talking and negotiating, you have concentrated all your energies on this work which is new to you and placed my piece in rehearsal. Now, you may be certain that no one knows as well as I do what it is to produce a work of this kind in the present circumstances. To do so one has to throw body and soul into it, sacrifice one's body and soul, concentrate all the fibres of one's body, all the faculties of one's soul, and have in view this single end: to bring to the light the work of one's friend, and in such a way that the representation will be beautiful and useful to one's friend. Dear friend, you have lifted me up as if by enchantment... I have found again the courage to endure. Once more, it is to you I owe this.

There were two performances on the 16th and 18th and they were very successful. Wagner could not be present, and Liszt wrote:

I owe so much to your valiant and superb genius, to the grand and burning pages of your Tannhauser, that I feel quite embarrassed to accept the thanks you have the kindness to address to me on the occasion of the two productions which I have had the honor and

the happiness to direct...

Wagner replied:

We two are coming along famously, are we not? If the world were ours, I think we should give people a good deal of pleasure...

Two months later Wagner watched Liszt conduct a rehearsal of his Tannhauser, and tears came into his eyes:

I was astonished to find in him my second self. What I felt in composing this music, he felt in directing it; what I wanted to express in writing it, he has ~~uttered~~ through the voices of the singers. Marvellous!

Later Wagner wrote to Liszt to have his Lohengrin played:

...You are the only man to whom I would address such a prayer as this. To no other but you would I confide the creation of this opera; but I entrust it to you without a shadow of fear or hesitation, with an absolute confidence. Have my Lohengrin played, so that its entrance into life may be your work.

Liszt agreed and answered:

...It goes without saying that we shall not cut out a note, an iota of your work, and that we shall give it in its beautiful absoluteness, as far as it is possible for us to do so.

In another letter he said:

We are swimming in the open ether of your Lohengrin, and I flatter myself that we shall succeed in giving it in accordance with your intentions...

Later:

Your Lohengrin is a sublime work from one end to the other: the tears have come into my eyes at many a passage...

The friendship and complete sympathy between Liszt as performer and Wagner as composer at this time is not a unique case. A similar story is told of Debussy and Toscanini. Toscanini read Pelléas^{at Melisande} in a single night and directed the score from memory. (O. Thompson, Debussy, page 207): "Debussy and Toscanini without knowing each other, adored each other." Debussy was brought to Toscanini to meet him behind stage. "When the door opened, and he saw Debussy, Toscanini stood up. The two men looked at each other for a long time, and, speechless with emotion, threw themselves into each other's arms."

But Debussy must have had a generous nature. When André Messager conducted the first performance of Pelleas at the Opera Comique about 1902, Debussy wrote to him and referred to "a splendid house, including Jean de Reszke." He gives Messager credit: (O. Thompson, Debussy, page 130):

I make myself plain. You knew how to evoke the sonorous life of Pelleas with a tender delicacy which one might as well not try to recover, for it is certain beyond question that the interior rhythm of all music depends on him who evokes it, just as any word depends on the mouth that pronounces it... Thus each impression in Pelleas was doubled by what your personal emotion had found in it, and had given it

thereby a marvelous sense of appropriateness.
This is surely something beyond the discoverable.
You know as well as I...

There are other examples. Sir Edward Elgar dedicated his first symphony to the conductor Hans Richter, "true artist and true friend."

According to Mr. Herman Klein, when Antonin Dvorak heard Edward Lloyd, the famous tenor, sing his "Songs My Mother Taught Me" he wept.

Chopin influenced the inner life of Liszt as Paganini had his technique. (de Pourtales, Liszt, page 45): "He (Liszt) was in the presence of a talent that would reveal his own possibilities to himself. ... If Franz, on his side, loved the Pole's Etudes, the latter declared that he wished he could steal Franz's manner of playing them. He dedicated ^eth_{em} to Liszt."

But perhaps the greatest tribute that a composer has ever paid a performer occurred when Chopin described one of his concerts in a letter on Oct. 12, 1830:

This time I understood myself, the orchestra understood me, and the public understood us both... If Soliva had not taken my score home and corrected it, and, as conductor, restrained me when I wanted to run away, I do not know what would have happened. He kept us all so splendidly in hand that I never played so comfortably with an orchestra before.

These illustrations show that the composer is not entire in himself. If he is wise, he is very grateful for sympathetic understanding and help. The fact that a man is a composer does not automatically make him an authority on correct performance or any other question of music. It was well that Chopin confined himself to one instrument, for he would have needed help with the technique of orchestration. (Karasowski, Chopin, pages 394-395): "In the orchestral coloring a certain timidity is frequently perceptible owing, perhaps, to an ignorance of the capacities of the different instruments."

When he was nine years old at the St. Petersburg Conservatoire, Rachmaninoff was allowed to skip elementary theory on account of his absolute pitch, but he had to return to it when he could not grasp elementary harmony without the background knowledge. Again in his first year at the Moscow Conservatoire he was excused from solfeggio. (Lyle, Rachmaninoff, page 36): "His brilliance as a pianist and his acute ear seemed to blind his professors to the possibility of musical talents in other directions... Advanced theory and harmony were imperative to make him able to give utterance to the creative powers: daily becoming more and more insistently awake within him."

When men work toward a common goal and are willing to share the glory as well as the responsibility, a tradition develops which binds them together and makes them more strong. It is through tradition that

collaboration occurs between a present-day performer and a composer of one hundred to two hundred years ago. Wallace wrote in The Musical Faculty (Page 52):

With the coming of Mozart and Beethoven Music entered on a new phase, and we have the first time in any marked degree one composer exerting a definite influence upon another. It showed that there was a style sufficiently well established and characteristic to appeal to the composer, and that he was aware that it was worth studying and cultivating. Its value to him, further, was clear, for he was founding his work upon a model that had been tested and accepted as the highest that had then been reached. Although he was following in his early work the lines that had been laid down by his predecessors, he had the consciousness that as he gained experience, he would ultimately secure a mode of utterance that was individual. It showed, above all, that the composer deliberately sought after the last stage in the development of his art, and that whether he had considered the matter for himself, or was following his musical instinct, he was adding his own link to the chain of evolution.

The above passage is cited, not to argue for a collaboration between composers, but to show how a tradition starts and why it is valuable.

At Weimar, pupils flocked to Liszt. (de Pourtales, Liszt, page 240): "They listened to him with something more than deference, this man who had known Schumann, Chopin, and Beethoven."

Debussy studied under Mme. Maute de Fleurville, a pupil of Chopin. He had a love for Chopin. At the conservatoire, at twelve years of age, he played Chopin at the first and second trials. He did well for there was an affinity in spirit and manner of

playing. At his third trial he played Beethoven and did not do as well.

Rachmaninoff Studied under his cousin who was a Liszt pupil. (Lyle, Rachmaninoff, page 50):

Rachmaninoff carried to us in the direct line the technical traditions of an artist who was, by common consent, one of the most notable - possibly the greatest - pianists yet known, Franz Liszt. He usually included one composition by Liszt in his recital programmes.

Thus both composers and performers of the past influence modern musicians. But this is not enough; composers and performers ought to understand each other's task. For an example, it might help performers to understand the composer's position, if they stepped into it temporarily themselves. Joachim did, and it forced him to apply to his violin-playing the thought and study demanded by composition, and enabled him to develop his powers of interpretation.

But knowledge of each other entails a responsibility toward each other. When a composer, such as Erik Satie, a friend of Debussy, invented absurd titles for his works and gave equally absurd directions to performers, he insulted their intelligence - even if it was done so in a spirit of joking.

Titles: "Three Pieces in the Form of a Pear"
"The Dreamy Fish"
"Airs to Make You Run."

Directions to Pianists:

Play - "on yellow velvet, dry as a cuckoo,
light as an egg."
"in the most profound silence."
"with hands in the pocket."
"like a nightingale with a toothache."

Or they must conform to a program like the following:

This a hunt after a lobster; the
hunters descend to the bottom of the
water. They run. The sound of a horn
is heard at the bottom of the sea.
The lobster is tracked. The lobster
weeps.

On the other hand, the performer too must show maturity. When Faure attempted an opera, he had difficulties. The first tenor chosen to play Kratos quit a week before the production was due, because Faure would not meet his demands in the matter of a high C and similar operatic tricks. Fonteix, his successor, was not so demanding, but even Vallier, who had just completed a successful part at the Paris Opera remained unhappy about not ending one of his arias with a high F.

These men deserve the criticism of "silly" and "vain" which was quoted in the chapter on "Performers." The tenor was more concerned with showing off his own ability than in working with the composer to achieve a worthwhile piece of work. Collaboration does not permit the artist to dictate to the composer nor to have too much to say in regard to the writing of his part. Patrons also proved to be a problem along this line. (Wallace, The Musical Faculty, page 35):

...a considerable amount of the composer's work was cast in the same mould, and when one composition succeeded in pleasing the patron, the composer repeated himself as

far as his self-respect would allow.

If the singer or patron or producer or what-have-you wants too much to say in the writing of a composition, he in effect interfer^es with, by trying to rewrite, the composer's work. Why is this deplored by composers themselves and most people in general? I believe that the performer or actor who wishes to rewrite the work is showing a lack of respect for another's property - even if the property has been given for public use.

Gioacchino Antonio Rossini (1792-1868) wrote down all the notes to be sung for his opera, "Elisabetta," because (Lives of the Great Composers, page 124): "experience had taught him that the improvisations in which the singers of the time used to indulge might be good or bad, but either way they were liable to alter the character of the music."

Hindemith cited cases of performers arranging others' works. He said that some add fingerings, slurs, dynamics, and other symbols to other people's compositions. They leave the notes as they were but feel free (A Composer's World, page 143): "to forge, interpolate, and adulterate as they please. It would be hard to understand what satisfaction people draw from the sinister enterprise of besmir^{ch}ing existing compositions and publishing them with their own name added to the composer's." He points out that of 95%

of all nonmodern music taught in our schools, no printed edition of the composer's original is available.

M.D. Calvocoressi spoke strongly against alteration in an article on Moussorsky in Lives of the Great Composers (vol. 2, page 119): Rimsky-Korsakov edited some of Moussorsky's "illiterate" music - from Boris Godounov for example. Yet Moussorsky once wrote to Rimsky-Korsakov, "With whatever shortcomings my music is born, with them it must live if it is to live at all." Calvocoressi adds: "It is hoped that this right of the artist to be judged by his own utterances will be acknowledged by all. Now that his output is available at last in its genuine form, there is no excuse for singing his songs or performing his 'Boris' except as written by him, thereby putting an end to a state of things which one would have thought would long since have given rise to protests throughout the world of art."

Thus to conclude, a performer and a composer are co-authors in a single enterprise. They ought to have a knowledge and an understanding of each other's work which results in a mutual respect and an eagerness to co-operate. Collaboration should not provide an opportunity for interference, lack of trust, or self-interest. When the collaboration is a "happy marriage" there is a strength in the bond of friendship or

understanding that unites the composer and the performer - and good things result! - such good things as Liszt working for the presentation of Wagner's music to the world. It is we, the audience, who benefit.

PART VI: THE AUDIENCE

If there is no such thing as unappreciated beauty and if compositions must compete to be declared masterpieces, is the audience a necessary element for a work of art to exist? Surprisingly enough, the answer is no. As a race and a diving competition may be held without spectators being present - assuming of course that the participants and judges are present! - so musical compositions could be written, performed, and judged without an audience. Yet it is better to have the audience present. A spectator influences, excites, and inspires. As he may cause a runner to perform better, so a possible exhibition of his work may inspire an artist. Competitors seek recognition. It is the spectators who grant the recognition. The audience's applause and approbation is the artist's reward. Their appreciation - whether yelled or put in print - is to the artist what the silver or gold medal is to the athlete, a sign of a recognized superior performance, a job well done.

It is a fact - not a theory - that both composers and performers are acutely aware of their audience. The composer, Gordon Jacob, has written: (Page 106):

The composer's attitude to his public varies very much as between one composer and another. Every artist has an instinct which impels him to communicate his thought to others. Some care less for public approbation than others but all covet it in some measure.

A sincere artist writes what is in him and is concerned only to express the ideas which obsess him while he is in the throes of creative activity. He writes to please himself, or, maybe, to release some inner tension. Yet always at the back of his mind is the vague consciousness of a future audience. If it were not so the necessity for effective presentation would not exist. His thoughts are expressed in musical terms. A written score is not music. Only when its symbols are translated into living sound does it come to life. When it does come to life its creator instinctively wants it to make some impact on other minds.

The very sensitive Chopin is an excellent example of what Gordon Jacob is talking about. Once again we turn to his letters: from Vienna, August 8, 1829 he wrote:

Everybody assures me that the newspapers will be certain to give me a flattering notice.

August 12th, after the concert:

There is an almost unanimous opinion that I play too softly, or rather, too delicately, for the public here. That is because they are use to the drum-beating of their own piano virtuosi. I am afraid that the newspapers will say the same thing, especially as the daughter of one of the editors drums dreadfully; but never mind, if it is to be so, I would much rather they said that I played too gently than too roughly.

August 13, 1829:

Today I was at the house of one of the newspaper critics, who is very well disposed towards me and is sure to write a favorable critique.

I wish to thank M. Skarbek, who was one of the foremost in persuading me to give a concert, the artist's first step in life.

To Titus, from Warsaw, on Oct. 3, 1829.

The Vienna Sammler and the Zeitschrift fur Literatur, from which Hube brought me the extracts, made the most flattering criticisms on my playing and compositions (pardon me for writing this to you), and called me, in conclusion, 'An independent virtuoso, whose playing is full of delicacy, and the deepest feeling.'

Yet at one concert, Chopin considered the highest praise not from the press but (Karasowski, Chopin, page 62): "from a smoker who in his eagerness to listen, let his pipe go out."

In another letter, to Titus, March 27th, 1830 he wrote:

To be candid, I must say that I did not improvise as I had intended, but, perhaps that would not have been so well suited to the audience. I wonder that the Adagio pleased so generally...

Warsaw, Oct. 5, 1830:

Although this does not quite suit me, I am curious to know what effect the composition will have on the public. I hope the Rondo will produce a good impression generally.

A letter to home on a Wednesday before Christmas Day:

The hostess (at a dancing party at Weyberheim's) and her amiable daughters had asked several musical people, but I was not in a humor for playing the piano.

Herr Likl, . . . , was introduced to me. He is a good, honest German, and thinks me a great man; so I would not destroy his good opinion by playing when I was not in the right mood.

But Chopin is by no means the only composer who writes or tells of his reaction to the audience's réception. In August of 1846 Mendelssohn presented his "Elijah" in Birmingham Town Hall. (Lives of the Great Composers, page 101.): "It met with overwhelming enthusiasm, and Felix himself wrote equally enthusiastically of its performance and of the audience's reception."

Berlioz was one time grateful that a work was not performed - for the sake of his reputation. Edwin Evans tells of this in regard to an opera which Berlioz wrote on Florian's Estelle. (Lives of the Great Composers, vol.2, page 37): "He afterwards declared himself fortunate in that nobody ever heard a note of it." When he died at 66, he was reported to have been heart-broken over the failure of his last and what he regarded as his greatest work, Les Troyens, which had been produced six years earlier.

Beethoven, who was perhaps a stronger character than Berlioz, was given the news on his death-bed that his last Quartet had failed to please. He was not

disturbed. "It will please them some day," he said.

The audience's reaction may act as an incentive to the artist to do better work or to please them again. Consider Rachmaninoff at the performance of his first opera at the Grand Theatre, Moscow, 1893. He heard the yells for "Composer, composer!" (Lyle, Rachmaninoff, page 86): "They continued until at length that half terrified individual, pale, somewhat wild-eyed, and obviously young, but unbelievably happy, was brought before the curtain to receive his due, and to be repeatedly recalled."

"To receive his due" is the important phrase. What happens to an artist if he feels that he is not receiving "his due"? Adolphe Nourrit is an extreme case, but he illustrates the suffering that may be caused by lack of appreciation. The greatest tenor of his day (born at Montepelier, March 3, 1802), he threw himself out of a window, in Naples, March 8, 1839, because he fancied that he was not receiving so much applause as formerly.

Even when the artist declares that he does not care for publicity, he needs some attention. (Probably if a man says that he does not care for public attention, it is because he thinks it will give a better impression not to desire it. Therefore, he does care what others' think of him!)

Gerald Abraham described Hugo Wolf as a problem child, temperamental, and not caring for publicity. He did not mind whether his songs were widely sung or not (Lives of the Great Composers, vol.3, page 179): "provided that his sympathetic friends were pleased." He said,

What do I want with the Wagner Society?
With singers? I'll have nothing to do with
publicity... If only I were a shoemaker...
Cobble on weekdays and compose on Sundays
just for myself and two or three friends...

It is common knowledge that an older child will misbehave if that is the only way that he can divert parental attention from a younger sibling to himself. I often think that an artist would rather have a hostile audience that is interested in his work, than an indifferent one that is uninterested. The story is told of Liszt appearing one evening before a hostile public, made so ~~owing~~ to articles in Revue Musicale. (de Pourtales, Liszt, page 63):

His entry on the platform took place amid an icy silence. This rather pleased the virtuoso, who was never so stirred as by a fine obstacle...

Never had the artist appeared more powerful or more winning, and in a quarter of an hour the hostile crowd was completely won over.

But a difficult or uneducated audience may have a bad influence. The artist may feel that he must come down to their level. Again we have an illustration

from one of Liszt's experiences. He went to the Scala in Milan and anticipated a difficult audience, for the Italians appreciated the voice but not the piano. Hummel, Moscheles, Kalkbrenner, Thalberg, and Chopin had not crossed the Alps. (de Pourtales, Liszt, page 74):

The publisher, Ricordi, did his utmost to prepare a select audience for the pianist... But he had to rely on juggler's tricks.. He improvised on themes that were proposed by some dilettante and then adopted by acclamation... He used a bowl and votes...

(Page 77 and 78):

In Vienna, it was a different story... Before these cultivated audiences he could play without fear Handel, Beethoven, Weber, Chopin, Berlioz, and his own dear Etudes... Every evening the Viennese applauded him more frantically.

However, one time Liszt did not win. His first defeat was in Leipzig at the Gewandhaus Hall, and it was due to too extravagant advertising - and no free tickets! The audience was predisposed against him for the city was jealous of its own position to criticise artists. It was cold and then openly hostile. There were hisses after his transposition of a pastoral. This set-back made him ill. He went to bed, and the second concert was delayed.

Rossini is another case. His "Barber of Seville" was first performed Feb. 20, 1816 and was practically hissed off the stage. The management was unpopular, and the partisans of Paisiello (who had successfully set

the same subject to music) wanted to find fault. Also there were accidents that sometimes occur on 'first nights.' Rossini was so discouraged that he slipped out of the theater and went home.

But this is not as unusual as another fact. At thirty-two years of age, he had 23 of his operas being performed in various countries. Yet at thirty-seven he quit writing operas. "The Great Renunciation," as it was called, has puzzled many people. Some think that it was the result of accident, circumstances, and his will. In 1830, the Revolution in Paris, which overthrew the government, destroyed his contract. Perhaps it was his health, for in 12 years he had written 30 operas. Perhaps, it was his audience. (Lives of the Great Composers, page 130):

Furthermore, he undoubtedly felt that his day was done, that people were far more interested in music like that of Meyerbeer, which he disliked...

He was out of sympathy with the revolutionary spirit of the times; he disapproved of the new orientation of the Italian Theatre, and above all he bitterly deplored the gradual decline in the standard of singing. Rossini was not exactly lazy but he needed a stimulus to exertion, and the stimulus was lacking.

Thus I have tried to show that musicians are very much aware of their audience and seek its praise. The audience is merely a group of spectators which encourage and applaud. The audience does not

have to struggle to receive any message or 'idea' from the artist or his work, because, generally speaking, he is not concerned with "speaking" to his audience at all.

It is true that artists prefer the applause from a cultured group of people more than from those who are not discriminative. Why? Because the educated group is more apt to know what it is talking about.

When someone who does not dive tells me that I did a "wonderful" dive, when I know that it was bad, I cannot be thrilled by the praise. It is not praise; it is poor judgment. But if a more experienced diver comes up and says, "That last one was not bad," I am glad for his words. Because of his experience, his words are meaningful to me. So it is with an intelligent audience.

"The listener is like a partner in a game, but he must be an educated partner." Roger Sessions in The Musical Experience says that a listener must listen intelligently. He must enjoy and understand the music. Sessions believes that he has done so if he can whistle the melody or hum it, or in some way repeat it.

A listener becomes "intelligent" in regard to music by listening to it. Rachmaninoff in an interview with Lyle spoke of the Americans as being good judges of music owing no doubt to their having the monzy to secure the best artists and orchestras.

(Lyle, Rachmaninoff, page 192): "This has raised their discriminative powers." I do not know by how much we have improved and whether Rachmaninoff, who was in the States at the time, thought that we were in advance, then equal with, or still 'needs to improve' in music appreciation in relation to older countries. Since travelling about Europe and hearing the same artists on tour here ~~which~~ I have heard at home, I doubt that we - or any one else - has an advantage in listening to the really top people. I only hope that we show artists as kind attention and as warm a welcome as they receive in other countries.

Stravinsky in his Poetics of Music discusses the audience. He says, (Page 87): "I have been able to note for myself in my double role as composer and performer that the less the public was predisposed favorably or unfavorably towards a musical work, the more healthy were its reactions to the work and the more propitious to the development of the art of music."

Prejudice certainly can interfere with listening. During the first years of the revolution in Russia, Rimski-Korsakov's "Kitesh" and Tchaikovsky's "Eugène Onegin" changed positions. First the one was played while the other was outlawed, and then the 'out' one came in and vice versa. It does seem a bit silly.

Collingwood maintains that the artist ought to consider his audience; he ought not to 'write down' for them, but he should feel at one with them and work within certain limits for their benefit. He should be careful about self-expression. (The Principles of Art, page 318): "What is Shakespeare to us or we to Shakespeare - but ourselves."

Collingwood considers the audience in a light that I would not. An artist must decide whether he wishes to be popular, like a Liberace, develop his stage personality and have his every action dictated by the likes and dislikes of his audience, or whether he will be strong in his own right and appeal to a more select group.

Rachmaninoff indicated his friendship for Tchaikovsky by dedicating to him a Fantasia for two pianos. He wanted it to be first heard (Lyle, Rachmaninoff, Page 89): "by the loved friend to whom it was written" with himself as one of the pianists.

In Paris, February 16, 1848 at Pleyel Hall, Chopin gave his farewell concert. (Karasowski, Chopin, page 342): "Chopin could not have desired a more select and distinguished audience, or a more enthusiastic reception."

Karasowski says of his playing: (Page 269 and 270):

His refined and poetical playing could not be heard to advantage in the large theatre; and it failed to arouse the enthusiasm of the audience.

Like those rare and beautiful plants which can only flourish in a soft genial climate, Frederick with his exquisite culture and delicate sensibilities, could only play con amore when in the best society, and among connoisseurs who knew how to appreciate all the niceties of his performance, which under such conditions had a truly magical charm. It was not in Chopin's nature to win the favor of the general public...

He said in confidence to Liszt: "I am not adapted for giving concerts. I feel timid in the presence of the public; their breath stifles me, their curious gaze paralyses me; but with you it is a vocation, for if you do not please the public you know how to agitate and confound them."

A.E.F. Dickinson tells of Robert Schumann

(Lives of the Great Composers, page 169):

As Schumann himself observed even of his most popular and animated piece, 'Carnaval,' his many subtleties of mood do not lend themselves to public presentation; and he was particularly fond of writing suites of delicately contrasted pieces. He is therefore chiefly for the private performer and listener and, like Bach, demands the intimacy of "Music on the Hearth."

As Collingwood pointed out, a viewer may understand the problem that the artist was trying to solve, or perceive an emotional element in a work, etc. The viewer can see more in a good painting than in a bad one. Collingwood is concerned with the question: is the viewer's experience identical with the artist's?

He concludes that we cannot be absolutely sure, but it is "an empirical and relative assurance, becoming progressively stronger as conversation proceeds, and based on the fact that neither party seems to the other to be talking nonsense." He says that if the artist is truly great, we will probably only get a partial meaning. Understanding is complex, and has many phases. It does not have to be whole or not at all.

The view that the audience is a spectator avoids this difficulty. The fact that the audience and the artist have to talk at all argues against Collingwood's theory. How can the artist's medium be a language, if he and his audience must continually translate his 'message' into words to be sure that it is understood. If there is no translation, there is no check that the meaning is the 'same.' Thought without words is not thought.

But the fact that the audience is a spectator does not make it unimportant. Many performers certainly work better in front of an audience. Lyle reported that the pianist, Rachmaninoff, preferred public playing to private because it exhilarated him. "After a recital containing several items of unusual difficulty once I remarked how tired he must feel. 'Not a bit,' he cried, his eyes shining, 'I could play it all over again.'"

A speaker who feels his audience with him may have an irresistible impulse to ad lib. The speaker becomes better as he is stimulated by the attention of the group.

Collingwood suggested watching a rehearsal of a play and then the actual performance to note the difference that the audience makes. The players seem to 'come to life' more when others are watching. They are better.

Criticism

A consideration of the audience leads naturally into an analysis of criticism, for critics form a part of the audience - and although their group is small, it is loquacious!

A reviewer gives an immediate reaction in the papers; he is more with the audience and reflects their attitude. It is the critic who is the important man, for he gives a considered judgement and helps in establishing the reputations of composers and performers.

Liszt gave a concert which (de Fourtales, Liszt, page 171): "unloosed a thunder of applause in the hall and a tempest of criticism in the Press, a double effect which artists know well."

It goes without saying that performers watch both reactions. The appreciation of a good audience is not enough if the next day in the papers, the audience, performer, and composer read that the great moment was not so great after all.

As Gordon Jacobs says: "Critics are necessary." They help establish reputations. (The Composer and His Art, page 99): "Musicians may pretend to be impervious to their praise and blame but not a few of them are addicted to the secret vice of subscribing to a press-cutting agency and all would rather have a good notice than a bad one."

Critics should have a thorough knowledge and practical experience of the medium which interests them, as a judge must know a game thoroughly. It is their job to help establish and carry out the "rules of the game." It is unfair however to concentrate upon their mistakes or to credit them with too much power. Gordon Jacobs says that too much weight has been given to stories of public hostility to the works of the great 19th and early 20th century innovators. (The Composer and His Art, page 107):

These have been greatly exaggerated. In fact the majority of music-lovers accepted them almost at once. The hostility nearly always came from a minority, not of the public, but of musicians too set in their opinions... Works of compelling power and originality are rare but when they do arrive they are not slow to establish themselves and to win admiration and affection from all kinds of listeners.

It is true that critics vary in their opinions and change their minds. Upon the death of his friend, Scriabin, Rachmaninoff gave a concert tour of his works. Some critics said that (Lyle, Rachmaninoff, page 157): "a special dispensation was needed for the sympathetic interpretation of Scriabin, and they abused Rachmaninoff and declared that he was unable to realise the music of his confrère..."

"Like Scribin, Chopin and Brahms were victims of this - a well-meant kind of adoration..."

"A set of parasite 'initiates' said that Rachmaninoff lacked the vision or intelligence or both to comprehend even the least esoteric works of the composer."

(Yet a year later they asked him to play and conduct Scriabin's works. He refused but rarely omits a Scriabin Etude, Poem, or Prelude in his recitals.) Lyle wrote, "No living pianist can more sensitively re-create the nervous, fugitive emotion, and often fragile tone-color of Scriabin's music than Rachmaninoff."

Too severe criticism can put artists off. The Royal Theater at Prague was one of the best and most celebrated ~~in Germany~~ during Chopin's time, but he did not wish to appear there. In a letter, Aug. 22, 1829, he wrote:

They wanted me to play, but I shall only stay three days, and have no desire to forfeit the reputation I gained in Vienna. As Paganini even came in for criticism, I shall take care not to perform in this place.

This is a good hint to critics not to be so damaging that artists have no desire to perform for them. Wallace in The Musical Faculty wrote along these lines:(Page 192-193):

The lack of sympathy and of generous understanding, persistent detraction and hostile criticism (the more cruel because it is so often anonymous), have many a time done more injury to a delicate and sensitive temperament than unsavoury surroundings and ill-chosen companions.

Titus overheard an interesting comment at one of Chopin's German concerts: "There is no doubt that this young man can play, but he cannot compose."

The audience does not have to agree with the art critics any more than spectators have to agree with a baseball referee! Time usually determines who was correct in a disagreement. But more often than not it is the judge, because of his particular position, who is able to see more and determine better who are the winners. It is well to listen to them. For whether he is right or wrong in his comments, artists will always take note of what is being said about themselves.

A Chopin letter, Nov. 9, 1830:

As I have not yet got a name, people could not make up their minds whether to praise or to blame me, and connoisseurs were not quite certain whether my music was really good, or only seemed so. A gentleman came up to me and praised the form as something quite new. I do not know his name, but I think of all my listeners he understood me the best...

I am truly glad that I was able to give pleasure to the dear old man.

CONCLUSION

I have tried to show that because of music's peculiar position, it demands a collaboration between more than one person. The composer creates; the performer re-creates; the critic judges; and the audience observes.

None of the present art theories concerning music will do alone because they do not stress the fact that in order for a composition to establish itself as a masterpiece, it must compete for recognition and prove that it is a superior achievement. Yet each theory contributes to the judging of a work. One theory would be more important to one type of work than another - eg. the use of the emotional theory of art in dealing with the romantic school of writers. For this reason I have suggested a 'superior performance' theory which stresses the importance of all the elements which comprise a work of art. Judges note but are not disturbed by the fact that these elements may vary from one composition to another.

Finally, I have tried to show that when music is played, there is a double judgment - a consideration of the performer and of the composer. And this is how it should be, for each makes an equal contribution to the musical experience.

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