

The Development of Music

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Liszt defines music as "The universal language of mankind by which human feelings are made equally intelligible to all; whilst on the other hand it offers to the different nations the most varied dialects, according to the mode of expression suitable to the character of each nation."

Again Schumann says "Music speaks the most universal of languages, one by means of which the soul is freely yet vaguely inspired."

I think it is conceded by all that music is a discipline subduing those base passions and opening the paths that lead to noble and higher ideals.

The story of music has been that of a slow building up and extension of artistic means of formulating, in terms of design, utterances and counterparts of feeling and sensibility.

Utterances and actions which illustrate the raw material of music are common to all beings even to those which men call dumb. A dog uttering short barks of joy on a single note at sight of a beloved friend or master is as near making music as the small human being vigorously banging a rattle or drum and

crowing with delight.

The impulse to make a noise as an expression of feeling is universally admitted and it may also be noticed that it has a tendency to arouse sympathy in an auditor of any kind.

To this impulse may be traced the origin of what we today consider music.

The examination of the music of savages shows that they hardly ever succeeded in making orderly and well balanced tunes but ~~either~~ expressed themselves in a kind of vague wail or howl, which is on the border line between music and formal expression of feeling, or else contrived to form little fragmentary figures of two or three notes which they repeated many times. Some times only one figure sufficed though when they were clever enough they combined two or more and alternated them but without much sense of orderliness and it took a long period of human progress and development before irregular haphazard alternation of a few figures became systematic enough to have the aspect of any sort of artistic unity. Thus such crude attempts at music scales began to grow but this development was extremely slow and it was not until special races had come to an advanced

state of intellctuality that men began to pay any particular attention to the relation of notes to one another.

Most primitive among these early efforts perhaps are the musical chantings of sacred hymns at family worship recorded by Max Müller. It is easy to understand from its origin the relation music has always borne to religion and worship.

In taking up the history of music there are two periods to be considered the Ancient and the Modern, the former period occupying the time up until the Christian era while the modern period dates from that time.

Ancient music was developed separately in every great nation but those leading in its development were Egypt, Greece and India.

Our earliest accurate records of Egyptian music and musical instruments is obtained from the inscriptions and carvings on the tombs discovered near Thebes. Of course we can not form a definite idea of this music but when we consider that these musical instruments consisted of harp having from five to seven strings it is not difficult to understand how simple this music must have been.

It is recorded that bands of musicians consisting of a number of "Harpers", "Singers" and "Flutists" were employed by all princely households but we are not told whether these instruments were played together or separately however it is probable that they were played at the same time and in unison as the idea of combined sounds other than the octave does not seem to have been developed until about 800 B. C.

It is surprising that even after 2,000 years the development of musical instruments had made very little progress but Plato attributes this fact to what Dr. Drafu calls the "prolative idea", together with their natural simplicity of mind and limited opportunities.

Next to the Egyptians the Hebrews and Assyrians were important in the development of music. Here we find the harp though in a modified form, also the flute, horn and from Egypt the timbrel. Instances are given of the Hebrews playing the harp to ward off evil spirits, the idea of music still being associated with some form of worship.

Near the close of the period in Palestine

women seem to have become more proficient in the art of music and a male musician was not so common as in the early days. There also psalms were sung in their worship and a sort of responsive song service seems to have been introduced and is important from the fact that it was very suggestive for later conceptions. This is about the only important feature of development noted among the Hebrews during the ancient period.

It is interesting to note the relation existing between our word "music" and the meaning of the same word in Greek. They both carry some idea of the nine muses but in ancient Greece it had a broader meaning usually signifying most of the common branches such as History, Grammar etc.

In Greece the progress of the development of the art of music may be divided into four periods, the first comprising about 250 years beginning about 1000 B.C. and consisted of wandering persons called minstrels who fitted the poems of Homer to melody and went about chanting these songs which they accompanied by picking on the Lyre, the musical instrument of Greece.

Following this period were the Rhapsodists as they were called, who sang patriotic songs more especially and who were employed in times of rejoicings to give the merry state.

After this marked progress in the use of music came the choral singers which consisted of a band singing in unison accompanied by the Cithara a form of musical instrument.

From this choral singing, was developed gradually what we call the drama. At first singers played the lyre and danced as they sang then in the course of time it became the custom for the leader to occupy a stage while the chorus was down below and as he sang he supplied appropriate gestures and actions and occasionally was surrounded by the chorus. Finally two or more speakers were added and the result was a drama with a chorus in connection. It only remained for Aristoxenus, a pupil of Aristotle to complete the first really musical work. It is to him and Aristotle we owe the practice of using the fourth and fifth intervals and later he wrote several works on harmony and rhythm thus we recognize the first really theoretical musical treatise.

In addition to these three countries Japan and China added some to the musical development and in India about 300 B. C. we find traces of music very similar to the modern ofered. In these countries we find a variety of musical instruments but not any of special importance, all being much after the same style, mostly stringed instruments either vibrated by the fingers or by a bow arrangement.

at the close of the period which we consider the Ancient Period. we find quite a transformation in the art of music as well as in musical instruments. In place of inharmonious tones mingled without regard to key and only octave intervals being used we find melodies which bear a definite relation to a certain key and the fourth and fifth intervals have come into use.

In instruments in place of the few stringed instruments of the Egyptians we find many stringed guitars of the Japanese and in place of using the fingers alone to vibrate the strings, bows have come into use.

There were several causes leading to these developments, chief among them being probably

the influence of the church.

Another factor was the minstrel bands of the north, Celtic people who were professional singers and who were employed to help in performing religious services, patriotic exhibitions, or afford entertainment. These belong to a sort of school composed of three grades, only those showing great proficiency in the art being elected to the third grade, thus making it a sort of competitive contest. The result being a thorough training to many if not a real development in music.

The Arabs or Saracens also contributed much toward the progress of music.

The first writer of the middle Ages to give us any real theoretical work on music is Hucbald. In his manual of music is begun the first idea of the development of harmony. He employs a sort of staff upon which a number of voices, singing at different intervals, could be represented at once and in these symphonies he uses fourths, fifths and octaves.

Guido in the eleventh century has added much, having introduced the staff, the use of notes to represent tones and the use of the hand for teaching intervals. His notes were however really letters upon the lines and spaces of the staff instead of notes as we have come to regard them.

These men who contributed so much toward the advancement of the art of music were both monks so we see how the church is accredited with having played so important a part.

We do not find an instance of the use of the third as a consonance until near the close of this period when a Franco is mentioned as having classified the consonances as — complete, the unison and octave; the incomplete, the major and minor thirds, the middle, fourth and fifth.

As has already been noted the ancients employed only the octave and considered the included notes as having no relation hence of no use in harmony. Our modern art of homophony has but a single melody at each moment but the use of some of the intervening notes included with in the octave have come to be used as a support. Just a step preceding this homophony we recognize what is known as polyphony or "multiplicity of melodies". The Round is a good example of what is meant by the word polyphony and after more than one element has been introduced we have at each moment a melody made up of a chord consisting of two three or more notes.

The polyphonic school which developed this phase of music went farther than the

"round" and supplied a conclusion and legitimate ending.

These schools were established in Netherlands, Italy etc and besides originating this form of music they did much toward musical development.

During the Ancient period of course the stringed instruments were in predominance and of these the violin was the most important especially was it an important factor in cultivating the ear for melody. This was essentially the musical instrument of the North while the lute was of equal importance in the South. It was of the guitar variety but somewhat different in construction. The determination of the location of the frets upon this instrument lead to the investigation of the mathematical relations of the tones in the scale.

Of course these musical instruments in different countries were modified somewhat in form and construction but no real progress was made toward their perfection until the bow was introduced to be used in vibrating the strings in place of the finger. These came to be used extensively and were many and varied in form but in 1546-1551 a family of Amati produced a violin very closely resembling our modern instrument of that name.

By 1600 the organ had attained a rather high state of perfection but was used mostly in the cathedrals. Its origin is uncertain but undoubtedly it is a

modification and perfection of the prehistoric wind instrument. These early organs were not fitted with valves as they are in the present day but the pipes "were made to speak" by the use of slides. Of course at this time the fourth and fifth intervals had not come into use hence these crude instruments were only adapted to the early form of music and an attempt to strike a chord would have resulted in a terrible combination of sounds.

The Dawn of Modern Music may be divided into four periods. The first is the Polyphonic period. When instrumental music began to develop independently it naturally followed the lines already followed by vocal music and was at first wholly polyphonic. Musicians recognized the importance of repetitions and also that there must be a beginning, middle and end to each musical production.

From the most simple melody in free song form was developed what is known as the fugue which is really a musical composition having a theme which is repeated by each of the two, three, or four voices for which the production is written. Next important part is the answer and usually accompanied by the counter subject which is a modification of part of the theme. These are called the exposition

and are followed by melodic ideas of the material, and repetitions.

This practice of using a definite theme or subject thru out a considerable portion of a movement distinguishes modern music from that of Lasso and Palestrina.

Authors which are prominent during this period are Bach and Händel.

The period closely connected with the Polyphonic period is the classical period in which the secret of musical contrast was discovered and the Sonata was developed by Haydn, Mozart and Beethoven.

The essential difference in these two types is that the Sonata is written in monophonic style. It is songlike in character and sung by a single part accompanied by chord harmonies and the necessary repetitions are made by what is called the Cyclical method which is a restatement of the original theme.

The Romantic period belongs essentially to the nineteenth century and is characterized by an individualism rather than the general in musical themes. It is an enlarging upon the old idea of what music should represent, really a reflection of the mood of the composer in his music.

To this period belong Schubert, whose music really retains something of the classic, Mendelssohn, Schumann, Chopin, Wagner, Liszt and we may even include Beethoven.

The fourth period of modern music includes the present day composers which on account of their nearness we can not criticize. Among these may be noted Johannes Brahms whose musical education began while he was very young and whose tendencies are rather classical than toward music of the future. Peter Tscharkowsky, a Russian composer, is noted for his great originality and spontaneity. His works include symphonies and concertos for the piano orchestra and violin. Operas, Ballets etc. A Scandinavian composer of great repute is Edward Grieg a disciple of the ideas of Mendelssohn and Schumann. Sir Walter Bennett was an Englishman also influenced by Mendelssohn but possessing much originality of his own. Others are Macfarren, Straus, McDowell etc.

In France music has probably reached its highest development in the theatre though the musical talent of this country is surpassed both in Germany and Italy however. France gives promise of much further of expression and force of production.

Russia is important to us on account of its abundance of folksong, which are not to be compared to those of any country perhaps with the exception of Sweden and Norway, on account of their enchanting melody and free capricious rhythm.

Sweden is made famous by Jenny Lind and Christine Nilsson both of whom were devoted to opera - German and French as well as Italian but also these singers have contributed much toward making the folksong of their land famous throughout the world.

Sir Sterndale Bennett was the greatest English composer of the period and from 1856 until his death in 1875 he was Prof. of music in Cambridge University. He did much for the musical development and the work being carried on at Royal College of Music by Geo. Grove and at a similar institution conducted by Dr Mackenzie give promise of a bright future.

The position which America holds in the musical world can best be estimated by quoting M. Charles Ribz when he said that American music was not yet born but was "seeking itself."