

*David Whitwell*

# The Missing Link in Music Education

*Maxime's Music*

Copyright © 2024 David Whitwell  
Edited by Craig Dabelstein

PUBLISHED BY MAXIME'S MUSIC

WHITWELLBOOKS.COM

MAXIMESMUSIC.COM

*First printing, October 2024*

# Contents

|  |    |
|--|----|
| <i>Why does the “Missing Link” in Music Education exist?</i> | 7  |
| <i>The Appearance of Music in Early Man</i>                  | 9  |
| <i>The Shift to Finding Emotional Meaning in Performance</i> | 15 |
| <i>Where exactly is Emotion found in Music?</i>              | 25 |
| <i>Toward a new Philosophy of Music Education</i>            | 33 |
| <i>Exercises for Developing the Awareness of Feelings</i>    | 37 |



# Preface

I BELIEVE IT CAN BE SAID that a consensus of philosophers for more than 2,000 years has defined Music as being a special language for communicating feelings and emotion. But today we do not teach the use of Music to represent feelings and emotion and this is the “missing link.” This subsequent “missing link” is rather alarming if one recalls ancient views of Music.

“Music Education is the true education of the inner being.”<sup>1</sup>

“Music is the most powerful agent of education, rivaled by no other, [and it can be shown where music education was missing] that our characters commonly deteriorate if they are left undisciplined, lapsing into base or brutal passions.”

And if society chooses not to help students learn to understand their own template of emotions and instead if society parenthetically says to the student, “you must learn about emotion on your own, out on the street,” then can society pretend that education has no responsibility for our violent society?

1. Plato (427–348 BC), *Republic*, discussion, 401d.



## *Why does the “Missing Link” in Music Education exist?*

IN THE EDUCATION of children’s literacy, the first stage we teach is the alphabet, the individual letters used to make words. In the education of music we also begin with the musical alphabet, the pitches and their names.

In the second stage we teach the making of words and their associated grammar (why we must say, “Give it to me,” and not, “Give it to I.”) In the second stage of music education we follow the same pattern, teaching how the notes are used to make chords and the associated grammar (why an F-sharp must resolve up and not down).

In the third and final stage of left brain education we continue with the endless continuation of language function, making sentences, paragraphs, chapters, books, etc. But in music education this third stage is missing. We do not teach the student the following purpose and uses of the chords.

And why do we not teach the emotional meaning and purpose of music in our early music education classes? It is because writing and speaking, our fundamental tools in teaching, cannot describe music. While this difficulty has been recognized for many centuries, we owe our modern understanding on this subject of the separate brain functions to Dr Roger Sperry (1913–1994), who was awarded the Nobel Prize in Physiology or Medicine in 1981, “for his discoveries concerning the functional and specialization of the cerebral hemispheres.” Today we can understand that we do not teach the use of music to represent feelings and emotions because the language we use in teaching is found in the left hemisphere of the brain whereas feelings and emotions are found in the right hemisphere and these two separate hemispheres are remarkably foreign to each other in their functions. This same physical specialization also explains, for example, why it is so difficult to write a love letter. In attempting to do this we are asking the left hemisphere to use its rational language to write about a subject it knows nothing about!

Due to the trillions of electrical connections throughout the brain, the research on this subject has produced many papers which have attempted to trace more definite routes in and between the hemispheres. But the fact remains that we, together with other species and even some plant life, are by nature bicameral beings. In our case, the left hemisphere of the brain is a library of rational knowledge, in particular language and numbers. This left hemisphere library has two important limitations: [1] it consists entirely of secondary knowledge, things we have read or have been told by other people and [2] it is entirely past tense information.

The right hemisphere of the brain is a library consisting of feelings and emotions based on our own experience. Words like "love" or "fear" have only personal understanding based on our own personal experience. You can read several books on the subject of "love," but your understanding of this experience will not be changed by other person's views or experiences. Hence we must understand that the world of the right hemisphere of the brain is the real and present tense us. These personal experiences found in our right hemisphere of the brain cannot be separated from the fact that the right hemisphere is also mute—it cannot write or speak in language! Music is the most powerful and appropriate means the right hemisphere has for communication.

This functional specialization in the two hemispheres is at the foundation of all education as we know it today.



## *The Appearance of Music in Early Man*

SINCE THE BICAMERAL NATURE is found in so many early life forms, we cannot help but wonder when and in what form Music first appeared. Paleontologists have long made the principal distinction between man and animal being the presence of speech. By this they mean speech as an independent textual language and this has led to centuries of philosophers attempting to discover the origin of speech. But this focus of their search completely ignores the fact that animals, without language, can still communicate feelings and emotions, as is obvious to anyone who has ever had a pet dog.

At the same time contemporary philologists all seem to agree that Music is older than Speech. By this they mean not Music as we use the term today but the use of vocal “musical like” sounds to communicate. And it seems safe to assume that the earliest forms of communication included the communication of feelings and emotions. Surely one of the most ancient examples must be that of the mother making cooing vocal sounds to lull her baby to sleep. And the earliest man was also using vocal sounds to communicate. One can imagine that if early man varied the vocal sound “Oh” to sound “Oh!” or “Oh?” he was altering the same basic vocal sound to communicate two different emotions. It is tempting here to wonder if the primary five vocal sounds, a–e–i–o–u, since they are found fundamental to all languages today, were the most ancient vocal sounds of mankind.

Here we must pause to introduce the word “mnemonic” (the first letter is silent, like the “p” of pneumonia) by which we mean using an expression to represent something else. Aristotle used this word as derived from the Greek *mnemom* to mean *mindful*. Today we use mnemonics as an aid to memory. I recall long ago my mother teaching me how to remember the names of the lines of the treble staff by remembering “Every Good Boy Does Fine.”

Now think of how ancient the example of the early man using a vocal symbol “Oh” as a mnemonic for a specific feeling must be. Looking backward in time, the oldest known left-brain language,

also a form of mnemonics, dates from the relatively recent date of about 5,000 BC. From this period back to about 13,000 was the period during which there was a gradual shift from hunter-gather life styles to more sedentary communities.

Earlier, during the Upper Paleolithic Period (10,000–40,000 BC), evidence of rudimentary clothing is found, together with the period of living in caves. And from 40,000 in Hihle Fels, a Swabian region of Southwest Germany, a flute has been found which has five finger holes and a V-shaped mouthpiece.

How much earlier can more primitive flutes be found? In one case, in a Stone Age cave in Southwest Germany, a 60,000 year old Neanderthal flute has been found! Even for so remote an age, the people who played these ancient flutes must surely have experienced feelings when they played. The proof is in the flute itself, for it suggests the player would not have gone to the trouble to make the instrument for any other reason than some form of personal fulfillment or enjoyment.

Therefore it seems evident that at some point during this very long period of time between the beginning of language, in 5,000 BC or so and the ancient flute players thousands of years earlier, the expression of feelings through Music had become a common practice. And this practice of Music, thousands of years before notation, was something the prospective student could only learn through personal association with a live musician. For this reason some people consider music teaching to be the oldest of all professions.

I FIRST BECAME ASTONISHED of the reality of the early practice of music before notation in 1966 when I had the opportunity, in cooperation with the U.S. State Department, to give French horn recitals in all the major cities of South America and Mexico. When in La Paz, Bolivia, I was strongly urged to go hear native musicians playing in a local coffee house. The owner of this establishment would fly out in a helicopter a few miles into the Altiplano, 14,000 feet and more above sea level, where people lived virtually as if still in the Stone Age, completely unconnected with modern civilization. He would then capture some musicians, bring them back to La Paz to perform, appearing in chains for dramatic effect, for his coffee house. After a few days in La Paz these musicians would make a culture leap of several thousand years into the present time, so the owner would let them go and fly out and capture some more natives to replace them in his coffee house.

The ensemble I was privileged to hear was extraordinary. They played with great emotion and musicianship, with surprising tonal and dynamic variety. Their instruments were simple instruments

made by themselves. The flautist, for example, performed on a piece of bamboo, perhaps 8 inches long, with 5 holes punched in it to make possible diatonic music. His technique was truly incredible; he could play as many notes per second as any flute graduate from the Paris Conservatory.

This performance made a profound impression on me for two reasons. First, I realized that I was having the rarest opportunity, to hear musicians who had never been exposed to written music. If I would have held up before them a score from my recital program, they would have not recognized that what they were seeing was "Music" or that it had any relationship to what they were doing. No doubt they would have thought that they were simply looking at some foreign symbolic language, which indeed is what music notation is. I was experiencing a glimpse of a very distant time when all music was understood to be for the ear.

This thousands of years period when Music was only for the ear and not the eye finds its echo in the modern German language where in a rehearsal room what is on the music stand is called "the notes" (*die Noten*) and not "the music" (*die Musik*).

AT SOME POINT during this very long ancient period of individual music-making attention would have automatically been drawn to the impact of Music on the listener. And from this moment on the use of Music for functional purposes occurred at the expense of its history as Art Music, of something just to communicate feelings. And when Music becomes functional, function often becomes more important than the Music itself. This is clearly illustrated in the history of the early Christian Church and its use of music in the liturgy. St. John Chrysostom (d. 407 AD) wrote regarding the sung form of the Latin service that, "Even if you don't understand the words they are still the most important thing!"<sup>2</sup> And the famous St. Augustine (354-430 AD) confessed that sometimes his attention was drawn to the music instead of the words. In such cases he felt he had sinned!<sup>3</sup>

When it comes to the consideration of the contributions of Music Theory or of philosophical writings on Music, the reader must remember that the performance came first and the discussions about music came later. Music was a particularly difficult topic for the early philosophers in particular because they could not even see music! Once the performance ended, the Music disappeared and could not be found, causing some to wonder if Music actually existed at all!

The one idea the ancient philosophers seemed to grasp was the question: Should man be governed by Reason or by their Emotions? The reader will immediately notice that these two terms are surrogates for left- and right-brain activity even though, of course, the

2. Exposition of Psalm XII.

3. "On Music," X.

ancient philosophers had not yet made any physical connection of this kind. In general it was the emotions for which those ancient philosophers had the most difficulty and the modern reader will find their views are often quite negative. Cicero (106–43 BC), as a case in point, could accept the idea that our senses were a natural part of nature, but he found the emotions were something quite different and clearly something to be avoided!

The emotions of the mind, which harass and embitter the life of the foolish. The Greek term for these is pathos, and I might have rendered this literally and styled them “diseases,” but the word “disease” would not suit all instances; for example, no one speaks of pity, nor yet anger, as a disease though the Greeks still termed these pathos. Let us then accept the term “emotion,” the very sound of which seems to denote something vicious, and these emotions are not excited by any natural influence. The list of the emotions is divided into four classes, with numerous subdivisions, namely sorrow, fear, lust, and that mental emotion which the Stoics call by a name that also denotes a bodily feeling, hedone, “pleasure,” but which I prefer to style “delight,” meaning the sensuous elation of the mind when in a state of exultation, these emotions, I say, are not excited by any influence of nature; they are all of them mere fancies and frivolous opinions. Therefore the Wise Man will always be free from them.<sup>4</sup>

4. Cicero, *De Finibus*, III, x, 35.

And again, in his treatise, *On Duties*, sounding like an early Church father or later Puritan, St Augustine emphasizes that any display of emotions suggests that we are not in control of ourselves. The more highly developed person, he with a “greater soul,” must especially observe this warning. In spite of the strong warning he intends to give here, we cannot help noticing the indication that he had some awareness, no doubt through simple observation, that there are two sides of our being, those which here he calls thought and passion.

We must be careful that the movements of our soul do not diverge from nature, and the care must be all the greater as the soul is greater. We shall achieve this if we are careful not to reach states of extreme excitement or alarm and if we keep our minds intent on the preservation of decorum. The movements of our souls are of two kinds: some involve thought, others involve passion. Thought is mostly expended in seeking out the truth, passion urges men to action. Therefore we must take care to expend thought on the best objects and to make clear that our passions are obedient to our intellect . . . Throughout a man’s life the most correct advice is to avoid agitations, by which I mean excessive commotions in the soul that do not obey intelligence . . . Whenever passionate feelings disturb our activities, we are, of course, not acting with self-control and those around us cannot approve what we do.

And since Cicero probably anticipated that his warning, that “passions must be obedient to our intellect,” would fall on deaf ears,

for as a last desperate effort he now paints for us contrasting pictures of the man under the influence of emotion and the man who has succeeded in subjecting his emotions to Reason.

The man whom we see on fire and raging with lusts frantically pursuing everything with insatiable desire, and the more lavishly he swallows down pleasure from all quarters, the worse and more burning his thirst—would you not be entitled to call him most unhappy? The man who is carried away with frivolity and empty euphoria and uncontrolled desires, is he not the more wretched the happier he thinks he is?

So just as these people are wretched, so are those happy whom no fears alarm, no distresses gnaw, no lusts arouse, no pointless euphoria dissolves in languorous pleasure. Just as the sea is recognized as calm when not even the slightest breeze ruffles the waves, so a state of mind can be accounted calm and peaceful, when there is no disturbance by which it can be agitated.<sup>5</sup>

Aristides Quintilianus, who lived between the 1st and 4th centuries AD and was one of the last of the ancient Greek philosophers, looked back and confessed that Reason was incapable of controlling the emotions.

No cure could be found in Reason alone for those who were burdened by these emotions; for pleasure is a very powerful temptation, captivating even the animals that lack reason, and grief which remains unsliced casts many people into incurable illnesses.<sup>6</sup>

He is one of many witnesses who speak of the ancient Greeks' using music to mold character and he also points out that it was their belief that music could do what Reason could not, with respect to the control of the emotions. He tells us that the ancients made everyone cultivate music from childhood throughout their lives in order that the proper kind of music would have a positive impact on the soul. The effectiveness of music in doing this he compares to the "diverting of a stream, which was rushing through impassable crags or dispersing itself in marshy places, into an easily trodden and fertile plain." One of the chief concerns of the ancients, he tells us, was with regard to the misuse of music.

Those who neglected music, melody and unaccompanied poetry alike, were utterly crude and foolish; those who had involved themselves in it in the wrong way fell into serious errors, and through their passion for worthless melodies and poetry stamped upon themselves ugly idiosyncrasies of character.

It was this concern, he recalls, which caused the authorities to assign "educational music to as many as 100 days, and the relaxing kind [of music] to no more than 30." He does not entirely condemn

5. Cicero, *Tusculan Disputations*, V, 15ff.

6. Quoted in Andrew Barker, *Greek Musical Writings* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1989), II, 457ff.

entertainment music, but in granting its place he still does not waver from the principal value of music, to form character.

We should not avoid song altogether just because it gives pleasure. Not all delight is to be condemned, but neither is delight itself the objective of music. Amusement may come as it will, but the aim set for music is to help us toward virtue.

He points to the success of the Greeks in doing just that and concludes,

Music is the most powerful agent of education, rivaled by no other, [and it can be shown where music education was missing] that our characters commonly deteriorate if they are left undisciplined, lapsing into base or brutal passions.

## The Shift to Finding Emotional Meaning in Performance

IT WAS DURING THE RENAISSANCE that composers and performers began to understand that the higher purpose of Music is to communicate feelings and emotion and not just an appreciation of the skill of performance. One can see this dramatic change in the madrigals of Claudio Monteverdi (1567–1643) and in a comment he made to a young singer who asked him about a specific tempo in his *Madrigali guerrieri et amorosi*.<sup>7</sup> He answered that the lament in question should be sung “to the time of the soul’s feeling [*affetto del animo*], and not to the time of the hand.”

7. Venice, 1638

Another letter by Monteverdi reminds us that in those early days of court supported performance there was time available to do it right! Concerning the rehearsals of his opera, *Arianna*, he observed that “after it was finished and learned by heart, [then!!] five months of strenuous rehearsal took place.”

And of course it was the creation of opera at the beginning of the seventeenth century which was dedicated to the idea of having a stage production which conveyed emotions. The previous stage tradition in Italy was one of spoken drama, in Latin. We can see this new goal in many comments by the original composers of opera. Cavalieri, in the preface to his *La rappresentazione di Anima*<sup>8</sup> says his goal is to “move listeners to different emotions, such as pity and joy, tears and laughter.”<sup>9</sup> Caccini, in his *Le Nuove Musiche*, writes that the goal was “to move the emotions of the soul.”<sup>10</sup>

8. 1600

9. Quoted in Nino Pirrotta and Elena Povoledo, *Music and Theatre from Poliziano to Monteverdi* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1982), 241.

10. p. 45

During the Renaissance Period there were a number of writers other than composers who struggled with the question whether Reason or the Emotions should rule the actions of men. For example in fifteenth-century England we actually find a work by John Lydgate titled, *Reson and Sensuallyte*. A similar contemporary work by Henry Medwall (b. 1461) is entitled *Nature*, but has the same theme. Here we find Nature warning man, “Let Reason govern you in every situation.”

In Sir Philip Sidney’s *The Countesse of Pembrokes Arcadia*, there is an internal masque (an internal play within a play with music and

dialog) performed by a group of shepherds under the title, *The Battle between Reason and Passion*. Here we find such dialog as,

REASON. Who Passion doth ensue, lives in annoy.

PASSION. Who Passion doth forsake, lives void of joy.

Important philosophers as well continued to argue that Reason must rule. The great Dante (1265–1321), for example, made the rather extraordinary statement that the senses “exist for reason’s sake alone.”<sup>11</sup> In one of his poems, he even suggests that a sensation such as pain cannot be understood by mere experience, but must be understood by reason as well (*Donne ch’avete intelletto d’armore*.) His strongest statement supporting the supremacy of Reason comes in another place in his *The Banquet*.

Anyone who sets reason aside and uses only his sensitive part lives not as a man but as a beast.<sup>12</sup>

Francesco Petrarch (1304–1374), in spite of being a musician as well, was a poet of much love poetry, which include the difficulty caused by the emotion of love interfering with Reason. For example, he writes,

If to love another more than oneself – if to be always sighing and weeping, feeding on sorrow and anger and trouble –  
If to burn from afar and freeze close by – if these are the causes that I untune [distempere] myself with love, yours will be the blame,  
Lady, mine the loss.

WITH THE BAROQUE PERIOD we begin to find more confidence in the emotions. Guillaume de Machaut (1300–1377) offers token tribute to the idea that Reason must rule, his more personal illustrations point to the contrary. After a debate over love and its consequences, the character, Loyalty, stipulates, “A lover would be a fool to listen to you, Reason.”<sup>13</sup> And what happens to Reason-dominated speech when Love is present?

It can force one, to cut short his words and interrupt them with sighs,  
drawn from the depths of his being, that render him mute and silent,  
and he has no choice but to remain speechless.

Saint-Evremond (1610–1703), in a letter to the Mareschal de Crequi, seemed no longer burdened with the idea of making a choice.

I can say one thing of myself, as extraordinary as true, that I never felt in myself any conflict between Passion and Reason. My Passion never opposed what I resolved out of duty; and my Reason readily complied with what a sense of pleasure inclined me to.

11. *The Banquet*, trans. Christopher Ryan, III, xv, 4.

12. *The Banquet*, II, vii, 3.

13. “Le Jugement du roy de Behaigne,” trans. Wimsatt and Kibler, 154.



The great Francis Bacon (1561–1626) accepts emotions and even admits they, like Reason, are capable of good. He finds, however, a third faculty, Imagination, independent of either, but through which both Reason and the emotions operate. In fact he suggests that man is only able to function rationally because imagination forms a “confederacy” with Reason against the affections.<sup>14</sup>

Another great philosopher, David Hume (1711–1776), raises the entire subject of the emotions to a higher level than any former philosopher, even going so far as to make feeling dominant over rational ideas. No one had ever before written anything so extraordinary as the following.

All probable reasoning is nothing but a species of sensation. It is not solely in poetry and music, we must follow our taste and sentiment, but likewise in philosophy. When I am convinced of any principle, it is only an idea, which strikes more strongly upon me. When I give the preference to one set of arguments above another, I do nothing but decide from my feeling concerning the superiority of their influence.<sup>15</sup>

Another who was inclined to raise the emotions to a level above Reason was Voltaire (1694–1778). First, he looked at the long history during which all philosophers, not to mention the Church, insisted that Reason must rule man and he found little to recommend this principle.

When one considers that Newton, Locke, Clarke, and Leibniz would have been persecuted in France, imprisoned at Rome, and burned at Lisbon, what are we to think of human Reason?<sup>16</sup>

Voltaire was also keenly aware that there is more to man than Reason, that there is a feeling side which, in the course of daily actions, may be even more important.

What will I gain from knowing the path of light and the gravitation of Saturn? These are sterile truths. One feeling is a thousand times more important.<sup>17</sup>

Finally we must mention Herbert Spencer (b. 1820), who was the first important philosopher to discern what modern clinical research has now established, that in fact it is our emotions which determine all our major decisions, not Reason after all. He begins by making an observation which, if one considers the development of the earliest man, must be true, that intelligence and Reason could only have been built upon the earlier foundation stones of feelings and the senses.<sup>18</sup>

In modern man, Spencer makes a finding that would have shocked, even offended 3,000 years of earlier philosophers, that “The chief component of mind is feeling.”<sup>19</sup>

14. *The Works of Francis Bacon* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1869), VI, 258ff, 299.

15. *A Treatise of Human Nature*, I, iii, section 8.

16. *The Works of Voltaire*, (New York: St. Hubert Guild, 1901), XXXVII, 174.

17. *The Selected Letters of Voltaire*, trans. Richard Brooks, 63.

18. Hector Macpherson, *Spencer and Spencerism* (New York: Doubleday, Page, & Co., 1900), 110ff.

19. *Facts and Comments* (New York: Appleton & Co., 1902), 36.

And so it is the case that we are not surprised to find in a letter written by George Washington to Lafayette, "Democratic States must always feel before they can see"<sup>20</sup> and the one by Robert Schumann, "The understanding may err, but not feelings."<sup>21</sup>

20. Letter of July 25, 1785.

21. Diary of 1833.

APART FROM THESE LITERARY DOCUMENTS, it is in the comments and descriptions of the musicians themselves in which we see supremacy of the emotions beginning in the Baroque Period. Perhaps no contemporary document expresses this fundamental change to an emphasis on feelings in performance than the famous eyewitness account of a performance by Corelli.

I never met with any man that suffered his passions to hurry him away so much whilst he was playing on the violin as the famous Arcangelo Corelli, whose eyes will sometimes turn as red as fire; his countenance will be distorted, his eyeballs roll as in an agony, and he gives in so much to what he is doing that he doth not look like the same man.<sup>22</sup>

22. O. Strunk, "Francois Raguenet, Comparison between the French and Italian Music" (1702), in *The Musical Quarterly*, XXXII (1946), 419fn.

It is in Germany, in particular, where one finds the most enthusiastic and dedicated search for studying the role of the emotions in music, a study which has been sometimes called, "The Doctrine of the Affections." The belief in this was strongly felt, as we see in the declaration by F. W. Marpurg in 1749, "All musical expression has an emotion for its foundation,"<sup>23</sup> and in the title pages of Bach's *Clavier Ubung*, Part III, and in the *Goldberg Variations*, Bach gives the purpose to "refresh the spirits." As we all understand today, the most important purpose of music is to communicate feelings, a purpose to which Johann Scheibe paid tribute in 1739.

23. F. W. Marpurg, *Der critische Musicus an der Spree* (Berlin), September 2, 1749.

Music which does not penetrate the heart nor the soul Does indeed consist of tones yet only is compelling to the ears, Which nature and art have not given sound, grace, strength, Is quite dead, and lacks spirit and vitality.<sup>24</sup>

24. Poem in honor of the publication of Johann Mattheson, *Der vollkommene Capellmeister* (1739), trans. Ernest Harriess (Ann Arbor: UMI Research Press, 1981), 74.

The most accurate testimonial of the view of the Baroque composer may be the one expressed in 1711 by Heinichen. He means to complain that no theorist has really written the definitive work on the "doctrine of affections." But he was describing musicians at large, including composers, when he admits that no one is interested in this topic. For this is how it has nearly always been: composers compose and the theorists come along later, and not before.

What a bottomless ocean we still have before us merely in the expression of words and the affections in music. And how delighted is the ear, if we perceive in a refined church composition or other music how a skilled virtuoso has attempted here and there to move the feelings of an audience through his galanterie and other devices that express the text, and in this way to find successfully the true purpose of music.

Nevertheless, no one wants to search deeper into this beautiful musical Rhetorica and to invent good rules. What could one not write about musical taste, invention, accompaniment, and their nature, differences, and effects? But no one wants to investigate the matters aiming at this lofty practice or to give even the slightest introduction to it.<sup>25</sup>

25. *Anweisung zum Generalbass* (1711).

And in another place Heinichen concurs that the notes alone are not sufficient.

It is impossible to find the tenderness of the soul of music with mere numeric changes of dead notes.<sup>26</sup>

26. *Ibid.*

The German writer, Christoph Bernhard (1627–1692), in a treatise on singing, has left a remarkable description, in 1649, of the singer's range of emotion in the new Florentine opera style.

In the recitative style, one should take care that the voice is raised in moments of anger, and to the contrary dropped in moments of grief. Pain makes it pause; impatience hastens it. Happiness enlivens it. Desire emboldens it. Love renders it alert. Bashfulness holds it back. Hope strengthens it. Despair diminishes it. Fear keeps it down. Danger is fled with screams. If, however, a person faces up to danger, then his voice must reflect his daring and bravery.<sup>27</sup>

27. Quoted in Ellen Harris, *Performance Practice after 1600*, 110.

Marpurg confirms a wide variety of emotions in performance and provides an interesting discussion of the integrity of the performer.

All musical expression has an affect or emotion for its foundation. A philosopher when expounding or demonstrating will try to enlighten our understanding, to bring it lucidity and order. The orator, the poet, the musician attempt rather to inflame than to enlighten. The philosopher deals in combustible matter capable of glowing or yielding a temperate and moderate warmth. But in music there is only the distilled essence of this matter, the most refined part of it, which throws out thousands of the most beautiful flames, always with rapidity, sometimes with violence. The musician has therefore a thousand parts to play, a thousand characters to assume at the composer's bidding. To what extraordinary undertakings our passions carry us! He who has the good fortune at all to experience the inspiration which lends greatness to poets, orators, artists, will be aware how vehemently and diversely our soul responds when it is given over to the emotions. Thus to interpret rightly every composition which is put in front of him a musician needs the utmost sensibility and the most felicitous powers of intuition.<sup>28</sup>

28. F. W. Marpurg, *Der critische Musicus an der Spree* (Berlin), September 2, 1749.

A contemporary report tells us that Bach preferred the Clavichord to the Harpsichord, which, though susceptible of great variety of tone, seemed to him lacking in soul.<sup>29</sup>

The most important, and thorough, observer of German Baroque performance practice was the conductor and composer, Johann Mattheson (1681–1764). He believed the central purpose of music,

29. Quoted in Robert Donnington, *The Interpretation of Early Music* (New York, 1964), 576.

after praising God, was the communication of emotion. The whole question of the “passions,” Mattheson suggests, is perhaps more the province of the philosopher than the Kapellmeister, but on a practical level it is fundamental to composer and performer if they are to communicate with the listener.<sup>30</sup>

In reflecting on the emotions in general, he observes that “most are not the best, and certainly must be curtailed or kept in check.” Love is an emotion frequently represented by music and in these cases the composer should “consult his own experience.” Sadness is second only to love in its use by composers, no doubt, he observes, “because almost everybody is unhappy.” It is for this reason that sacred music employs this emotion so effectively, because it represents the “penance and remorse, sorrow, contrition, lamentation and the recognition of our misery.”

Regarding the expression of emotions through music, Mattheson first gives several obvious illustrations which we might recognize today as simple text-painting: Joy, being an expansion of our soul, represented by large and expanded intervals; Sadness, being a “contraction of these subtle parts of our body,” represented by small intervals and Hope and Depression through obvious melodic direction. Mattheson then turns to more specific prescriptions for representing emotions through music.<sup>31</sup>

Pride, Haughtiness and Arrogance are represented by a “bold, pompous style . . . majestic musical figures which require a special seriousness and grandiloquent motion.” For these, the melodic line must invariably ascend. The opposite emotions of Humility, Patience, etc., are represented by “humble music with descending melody.”

Stubbornness, he writes, “deserves a special place among the affects that are appropriate to musical rhetoric,” and is represented by “so-called capricci . . . namely when one writes such peculiar passages in one or another voice which one is resolved not to change, cost what it may.”

For Anger, Ardor, Vengeance, Rage, Fury and other such “violent affections” it is not enough, “that one rumbles along strongly, makes a lot of noise and boldly rages: notes with many tails will simply not suffice, as many things; but each of these violent qualities requires its own particular characteristics, and, despite forceful expression, must still have a becoming singing quality.”

Hope, “is a pleasant and soothing thing, consisting of a joyful longing which fills the spirit with a certain courage.” This, therefore, “demands the loveliest use of the voice and the sweetest combination of sounds in the world.” Mattheson assigns dissonance to the expression of the unpleasant, disagreeable, frightening and horrible, although interestingly enough “the spirit even occasionally derives

30. Johann Mattheson, *Der vollkommene Capellmeister* (1739), trans. Ernest Harriss (Ann Arbor: UMI Research Press, 1981), I, iii, 52ff.

31. *Ibid.*, I, iii, 72ff.

some peculiar sort of comfort from these." Despair should be represented by "unusual passages and strange, mad, disordered sequences of notes." In contrast, Composure is best represented by a "soft unison."

He suspects most composers who fail to effectively express emotions in music do so because they do not know their own desires or what they actually wanted to achieve. But failure in this has significant implications for the listener. He says here, in effect, that whatever is written which represents only the "theory" of music communicates nothing to the listener.

It is very interesting and revealing that Mattheson defines the traditional Baroque instrumental forms not so much by tempo, as by their subjective styles. For example he finds,

- Minuet—moderate cheerfulness
- Govotta—true jubilation
- Bourree—contentment and pleasantness, not so degenerate as the gavotte
- Rigaudon—somewhat trifling joking
- La Marche—somewhat heroic and fearless, yet not wild and running
- Entree—noble and majestic
- Gigue—ardent and fleeting zeal
- Polonaise—frank and free
- Angloise—stubbornness
- Hornpipe—frivolity
- Sarabanda—to express ambition
- Courante—sweet hopefulness
- Allemanda—a content or satisfied spirit
- Chaccone—more satiating than tasteful
- Intrada—to arouse longing

With the absence of text, the performer of instrumental music must take even more careful note of the Italian expressions at the beginning of the composition for clues to the emotions. Here the reader will be surprised by Mattheson's understanding of the characters and emotions associated with the familiar "tempo" terms.

An Adagio indicates distress; a Lamento lamentation; a Lento relief; an Andante hope; an Affetuoso love; an Allegro comfort; a Presto eagerness.

Finally, that instrumental music can indeed express emotions is obvious in practice, he observes, but “never in theory.” By this he means it is a subject difficult to write about, although he himself makes an admirable summary.

The proper goal of all music [melody] can be nothing other than the sort of diversion of the hearing through which the passions of the soul are stirred: thus no one at all will obtain this goal who is not aiming at it, who feels no affection, indeed who scarcely thinks at all of a passion; unless it is one which is involuntarily felt deeply.

By the nineteenth century it had become so evident that the purposes of music was to express feelings and emotions that for many it had become a virtual language of its own.

Robert Schumann

Schubert unburdened his heart on a sheet of music paper, just as others leave the impression of passing moods in their journals. His soul was so steeped in music that he wrote notes where others use words.

Richard Wagner

Music is the speech of Passion.

...

Music, who speaks to us solely through quickening into articulate life the most universal concept of the inherently speechless Feeling.

Leo Tolstoy

Music is the shorthand of emotion.

Felix Mendelssohn

Music is a distinct language which speaks clearly.

...

People usually complain that music is so ambiguous; that it is so doubtful what they ought to think when they hear it; whereas everyone understands words. With me it is entirely the reverse. And not only with regard to an entire speech, but also with individual words; these, too, seem to me to be so ambiguous, so vague, and so easily misunderstood in comparison with genuine music, which fills the soul with a thousand things better than words. The thoughts which are expressed to me by a piece of music which I love are not too indefinite to be put into words, but on the contrary too definite.

Modeste Moussorgsky

Music is a means of communicating with people, not an aim in itself.

Edward MacDowell

Music . . . is a language, but a language of the intangible, a kind of soul language.

Herbert Spencer

Music is an idealization of the natural language of passion.

Franz Liszt

When one is at a loss what to say or write, well—one tries to help oneself with music.

Richard Wagner

It is a truth forever, that where the speech of man stops short, there Music's reign begins.

Hans Christian Anderson

Where words fail, music speaks.

Leo Tolstoy

Music is the shorthand of emotion.

Emotions which let themselves be described in words with such difficulty, are directly conveyed to man in music, and in that is its power and significance.

Victor Hugo

To sing seems a deliverance from bondage. Music expresses that which cannot be said, and which cannot be suppressed.

Robert Ingersoll

Language is not subtle enough, tender enough to express all we feel, and when language fails, the highest and deepest longings are translated into music.





## *Where exactly is Emotion found in Music?*

THE IMMEDIATE ANSWER to this question is: in the Melody, something which is clearly evident in all music from the most ancient time when melody was the only element of music which existed. It is from this fact that the definition of Music evolved among some 2,000 years of ancient philosophers was, that Music is a Special Language for the Communication of Feeling and Emotion.

A new emphasis in the purpose of music becomes evident during the Renaissance Period when the meaning becomes more important than technique. This recognition that melody is synonymous with emotion, made melody the fundamental element with the beginning of opera in 1600 by composers who wanted to create a large-scale stage medium which emphasized the emotions, a departure from the then traditional tedious performances of long spoken poems in Latin. By the nineteenth century, even though all the elements of music had been highly developed, the central feature was clearly the representation of the emotions. This definition was documented in a famous discussion by Mendelssohn.

People often complain that music is too ambiguous; that what they should think when they hear music is so unclear, whereas everyone understands words. With me it is exactly the reverse, and not only with regard to an entire speech, but also with individual words. These, too, seem to be so ambiguous, so vague, so easily misunderstood in comparison to genuine music, which fills the soul with a thousand things better than words. The thoughts which are expressed to me by music that I love are not too indefinite to be put into words, but on the contrary, too definite.<sup>32</sup>

32. Letter to Marc-Andre Souchay, Berlin, 15 Oct. 1842.

The range of emotions now associated with Music was very broad, as one can see in a description by Richard Wagner in a comment on his conception of his opera, *Tristan and Isolde*, which he wrote for a performance of the Prelude of this opera on 2 January 1860.

A tale of endless yearning, longing, the bliss and wretchedness of love; world, power, fame, honor, chivalry, loyalty, and friendship all blown away like an insubstantial dream; one thing alone left living—longing,

longing unquenchable, a yearning, a hunger, a languishing forever renewing itself; one sole redemption—death surcease, a sleep without awakening.

### *Some thoughts on Emotions in Melody*

I BELIEVE IT IS REASONABLE to conclude that when a composer creates a melody the very act of creation has as its origin some emotional feeling based on their past experience. It seems impossible to me to imagine a composer just putting notes on paper without feeling. Deryck Cooke, in his historic study of emotion and notation, *The Language of Music*, a book from which we have been thoroughly inspired, believed that the creation of melody had as its origin some unconscious memory of specific melodic fragments previously known and remembered by the composer.<sup>33</sup> I prefer to describe the origin as genetic, although what is genetic no doubt contains some memory of all music the composer has ever heard. Cooke gives here as a perfect example of the union of feeling and melody the beginning melody of Beethoven's Sixth Symphony, which does perfectly provide the listener with the feeling of one leaving one's residence, stepping outdoors and being overwhelmed with the joy of the first day of Spring.

33. p. 186

I might add here, from my own experience as a composer, that one is almost intimidated by wondering if it is possible to create an original melody out of the only same seven notes which have been used by every composer for the past five centuries. The fact that there seems no end of the possibilities of melodic invention with only seven notes lies in the fact that it is the personal association with the emotion felt by the composer which is by its very nature original and cannot be duplicated by the life experience of another composer.

Another characteristic of the composer's original idea of a melody is that it must come to them not as mere melodic notes but as notes already moving in time, for indeed the basis of any emotion includes motion, the feeling of a living emotion moving through Time. Here is a good place to point out that the word "emotion" has only one alphabetical difference from the word "motion." The concept of an emotion existing only in the literal present tense, with no past association and no question of moving forward is impossible. Melody must be synonymous with movement. Other labels which are used with regard to the movement of melody though time, such as rhythm, and meter, refer to the division of movement but rarely alter the basic emotion involved.

## *On Harmony and the other Elements of Music*

IT IS MY VIEW THAT HARMONY rarely plays a fundamental role in the expression of emotions. First of all, its internal components are somewhat contradictory: a minor key includes several major chords and a major key includes several minor chords. Second, harmony very rarely comes as an original inspiration, as is the case with melody. Usually it has to be appropriately worked out and as Cooke observed, “there is always something intellectually calculated about it.”<sup>34</sup> In my view the fundamental role of harmony has more to do with creating movement in music rather than in emotional meaning, as in the case of a chord which by its very technical nature requires the following chord.

34. p. 193

A subject which follows here is the question of what do we mean by the “technique” of composition? In the composition of aesthetic music the role of the composer’s technique is found in their continued effort to define and develop their creative expression. The historic model of this definition is found in the sketchbooks of Beethoven. There one can see where an original inspiration is notated, followed by sometime pages of refining and manipulating this melodic idea in order to find its perfect form to be used in a composition.

Technique has its place in the beginning composition course but in the role of creation of an actual score it should not have an independent identity. Certainly the technique of just adding notes on paper will not result in anything of value.

In this regard let me give an illustration from my own experience. I decided to begin composing for the first time at age 50, following the strong recommendation by my friend Fred Fennell that given the significance of this number everyone should do some one thing new or different after the age of 50. I was confident that I was capable of composing, since the first Minor of my Ph.D. program was Theory and it was clear to me in advance that I did not want to imitate the typical idioms of band music. But when I sat down at the piano and began improvising I found I was playing notes with no meaning. I eventually realized that the meaning had to come before the notes so I left the keyboard and sat in a comfortable chair for some days just thinking about emotions until an emotional inspiration regarding “what I wanted to say” came to me, and from that point on the notes came by themselves.

*Thoughts on Content and Form in Music*

“CONTENT” IS A WORD WHICH HAS NO MEANING other than the sum of the musical elements in a passage of music. “Form” is a label created in order to attempt to describe for the listener the organization of the continuous development of the musical experience. However, in the academic environment “form” is sometimes made to seem more important than the content.

In the process of discussing form the student is sometimes given unusable information. A case in point is the classroom presentation of the Sonata form. The teacher writes at the top of the blackboard, “Sonata.” Then below it they write the names of the three sections of the sonata form:

Exposition — Development — Recapitulation

This and the following discussion of these three sections is all true information but it is also unusable information. It is unusable information because neither the composer, the player nor the listener ever perceives the music from this perspective, like standing at the side of a barn. What the listener actually perceives is equivalent to standing at the beginning of the word “Exposition” and looking across the blackboard, perceiving the music as it occurs through time to the end of the movement. This would result in usable information as it corresponds with the listening experience itself. Furthermore, the composer would have been very much aware of the phenomenon that as Time recedes into the past it becomes foreshortened in the memory of the listener. Consequently the composer will often make changes in the recapitulation, shortening it so that for the listener this statement will match their memory of the original statement, now recalled as something in the past. Another example which comes to mind is in the Rondo of Mozart’s Symphony Nr. 40 where he notates the Primary statement as AABB but in its return later it is AB. The teacher may be likely to point to this as an example of an incomplete return, however, on the contrary, for the listener it is the experience of a complete return for it now matches the original AABB as it is now recalled in their memory. If Mozart had repeated AABB here the listener would probably feel it was unnecessarily long.

I might add that these familiar characteristics of repetition in Music are something which is found as satisfying in the right hemisphere of the brain of the listener, much as the pleasure in seeing an old friend after a period of time. But nothing like this exists in the

left hemisphere of the brain. Can you imagine having read a book to the end and then finding an instruction, "Go back and reread the first five chapters." What could be less satisfying?

Finally, the perception of music moving over these long formal periods is crucial to solo performers and conductors. Eugene Ormandy had a unique gift in this regard, as I was once able to observe when studying with him. At that time the Philadelphia Orchestra performed under very strict limitations relative to the duration of time during its performances, as required by the musicians union. If the performance exceeded the established limit for a concert's duration, the pay of all 100 musicians was greatly increased, much to the distress of the management. Therefore the length of applause had sometimes to be ended in order to meet this time barrier. To manage this problem Ormandy kept a notebook in which his assistant recorded the length of time during rehearsal and concert of every movement of every composition in order that in preparing new programs he could be careful not to select music which exceeded the performance time allowed. The occasion I observed involved a performance of Bruckner's Symphony Nr. 4 and the Mendelssohn Violin Concerto, to be performed by a lady violinist from Russia whom no one knew.

She only appeared for the final rehearsal and she immediately set a tempo far slower than the standard performance of this concerto. The orchestra and soloist ran through the composition without stopping, after which Ormandy came down into the hall where I was sitting with the assistant conductor with his stopwatch. Ormandy immediately asked, "How much over is it?" The assistant conductor replied, "Five minutes, sir, what will you do?" Ormandy thought for a moment and replied, "I will take five minutes off the Bruckner." I consequently brought my stopwatch to the first public performance and I was astonished to find that indeed the Bruckner was five minutes shorter than it had been during the previous five days of rehearsal. The impressive thing was that Ormandy had such a gift for time over this long period that he was able to take off little quantities of time here and there in such a logical manner that I am sure no orchestra member was aware of this change in his interpretation!

### *Thoughts on the Role of Emotion in Aesthetic Composition*

THE FOLLOWING IS A CONSIDERATION of the composition of aesthetic art music. We omit here the composition of functional music as well as popular music and entertainment music, all of which have goals apart from the communication of pure music to the listener.

To begin a composer must have something of themselves to communicate. It is unthinkable that a composer would just begin writing notes without feeling or purpose. They must write notes which respect their relationship with the acoustical rules of music, but in composing they must be the master of these rules and not their servant.

But first and foremost the composer must understand that in aesthetic music “meaning” is synonymous with emotion expression and, respecting the most important advantage Music has over the other art forms in that it brings the listener into direct contact with the mind of the creator. If the expression is to be genuine the composer must feel this emotion before they begin to compose. We recognize that the urge to communicate these emotions in music comes to the composer first in the form of an inspiration.

### *On Inspiration*

THE INSPIRATION THE COMPOSER HAS must be based on their own feeling and experience, which sometimes comes from a spiritual source which the composer themselves may find difficult to identify. Mendelssohn, in a letter to his family,<sup>35</sup> observed that inspiration “just comes into our heads.” Aaron Copland, in his book, *What to Listen for in Music*,<sup>36</sup> called it “a gift from Heaven over which the composer has no control.” And William Byrd, in the 1610 edition of his *Gradualia*, in discussing religious texts, explained,

35. 2 August 1829

36. Chapter 3

I have learned from experience that there is a secret hidden power in the texts themselves; so that to one who ponders things divine and turns them over carefully and seriously in his mind, in some way, I cannot tell how, the appropriate music occurs of its own accord.

It becomes a matter of the composer’s creative imagination to turn the inspiration into living music and they do this primarily by making the inspiration synonymous with their melody. Because the basic emotions are universal, if the composer is successful they have reason to expect their communication will have universality. This is exemplified by a comment which Beethoven added to his manuscript of his *Missa Solemnis*, “From the heart — may it go back to the heart of the listener.”

If the composer’s technique is employed without this purpose, then their music will convey nothing to the listener.

### *Regarding the Listener*

THE LISTENER OF A PERFORMANCE OF MUSIC has a unique and priceless advantage over the observer of any other art form because they have an immediate and personal connection with the mind of the composer, for whom feeling came before the notation of the music. An observer of a painting, on the other hand, has to first view and understand the elements of the picture itself before they can then contemplate on what the artist may have been thinking or feeling. The painting itself stands between the observer and the painter.

This aspect of listening to Music is a very important characteristic of Music itself. Because the basic emotions are universal in general, the more refined emotions of the composer will have the effect of “educating” the listener, raising the understanding of the basic emotion of the listener to a higher level. Because of this important potential in adding to the listener’s experience it is important that the observer listens with the right hemisphere of their brain and not the left, making no effort to hear and recognize the technical elements of what they are hearing but rather to just let the music flow over them and absorb the emotional experience alone. Because of the importance of this I have heard it observed that a degree in music ruins a person as a listener.

In addition, since the basic emotions are universal the listener will by nature be able to understand the emotions of the music. No listener would ever confuse a happy musical experience as being a sad experience. This universal quality of the basic emotions also plays an important role in how the music reaches the listener. As Wagner once pointed out, first, you have the composer, then the performance during which the players attempt an accurate rendition of the composer’s intent. But then the music takes flight out into the audience where each and every listener takes in the emotion they hear and then sifts it through their own bank of experience, their right hemisphere, where they will experience the emotions of the music on a personal level. Thus, in an audience of 300 listeners, while all will connect with the basic emotion of the composer, each will have an individual understanding of that emotion based on their own past experience with that emotion—300 different perceptions. In another place Wagner was thinking of this distinction when looking at two members of the audience listening to a performance of his music, a distinguished elderly general who had tears running down his cheeks and next to him his wife who was in the last reaches of boredom!





## *Toward a new Philosophy of Music Education*

ALONG WITH THE RETURN to the emphasis of performance there appeared in the nineteenth century the earliest music schools in their modern form, such as the early one founded by Robert Schumann. But these schools had their focus on technique, training performers. In these schools any instruction relative to feelings and emotion came not as a fundamental part of the music education of the beginning student, but at the end of the study of a composition, consisting in criticism of the performance of the finished composition, suggestions on how a composition should be performed. This has remained the tradition throughout the nineteenth century and for the most part until the present time.

In Europe today one frequently finds “Weekend Conservatories” organized by local civic bands where young students receive instruction on various instruments. Their long range object is to fill future chairs in the civic band and I recall once guest conducting one of these bands where there was a fifteen-year-old clarinetist sitting next to a man who had been playing clarinet in the band for 70 years! This model will be familiar to Americans who observe school bands, where the Elementary and Junior High school bands exist in part to fill the future needs of the high school band.

This tradition of how to perform as a matter of technique rather than of feeling, was reflected in the experience of my mother, for example, who was a student of a German piano teacher in 1923 in Enid, Oklahoma, who had been a student of the great Franz Liszt. This teacher passed on to each of his students one composition which he had studied with Liszt with the instruction that they were required to pass on this interpretation to their own students, as a matter of historical integrity. And so my mother continued to perform her assigned work from memory for the next 70 years in public performances with the explanation that this was how Liszt wanted the work to be played!

My mother as a piano teacher always had a class of 20 or so young piano students and she at least was thinking in the right direction.

I recall her frequently telling them to play with “more expression,” although she did not elaborate on this term by speaking of specific feelings or emotion. This brings to my mind my experience as a lad of perhaps 7 or 8 years of age, during which I took “Expression” lessons from a private teacher in Kansas. She would give me various poems and coach me on using the voice to illustrate the text. For example if the text read, “He looked down the long road,” she would teach me to recite, “He looked down the l—o—n—g road,” as I pointed off in the distance. As a child I performed these poems resulting with “Ohs” and “Awes” before women groups at church.

Another rare example of a teacher attempting to introduce the emotional aspects of a composition which really impressed me was a former student of mine who was now a private piano teacher. She taught in her home and on the wall behind the piano she had arranged about a dozen pictures of faces she had collected, some with smiles, some sad, etc. After a student had played their assignment she might point to the wall and ask, “Which face matches the music you just played?” Or, she might request, “Please play the piece again and make it sound like this face,” pointing to one on the wall. The literal success of the student did not matter; what mattered was the student was being introduced to becoming aware of something beyond the notes.

This approach is similar to something I sometimes did in rehearsal with the full wind ensemble, in places where the comment was appropriate. I might say to the ensemble after a cadence, “That sounded great, but I didn’t hear any pain!” Then I would immediately repeat the phrase and the difference would always be astonishing! Thirty minutes of additional rehearsal and talk would not have accomplished what the students did on their own once their attention was focused.

Another example of this which I often used as a demonstration in clinics was based on the beginning of the final movement, a Theme and Variations, of the great C Minor Octet, K. 388, by Mozart. I have always felt that if Mozart had a choice he would have elected to be just an opera composer and there are consequently many examples of his purely instrumental compositions which sound like they should be sung by soloists. As a case in point, this movement begins with music which sounds like it should be sung by a noble in a comic opera. The very pompous *forte* melody sounds like it should have the words, “I am the King of Austria and every word is my command!” as he struts across the stage. But in the first ending the character of the music changes and it conveys a feeling of doubt, “but I’m not sure!” Here I ask the eight members of the ensemble to do something in their performance to convey this sense of doubt. They could

change their posture, their facial expressions while they played, their dynamics or anything they wanted or could think of etc., but I left it to them to do this with no further comment from me. I would then, after just a brief pause, have them play again from the beginning and the change in character in the first ending was always dramatic and very obvious.

These are worthy examples of an attempt to influence the performer to think beyond the notes on paper, but again after the fact, at the end of the study. What is needed, in my view, is for this kind of thinking to be introduced in the early stages of the student's study.

The issue is to introduce to the student the "meaning" of the music beyond just the notes and technique, reflecting Mahler's famous statement that "the important things in music are not found in the notes." The idea that music affects Character, for example, has been recognized by philosophers for thousands of years.<sup>37</sup>

The goal is to create a more well-rounded student, in addition to becoming a performer on a musical instrument. This is the "Missing Link" in current music education and the following exercises and discussion represent one suggestion on how this might be done.

37. For the readers who may wish for more information on this subject, I recommend my latest book on music education, *American Music Education: The Enigma and the Solution*, which is available from Amazon.com. Here one will find discussions on music and the development of Character, Manners, Truth, Morality and Spirituality.



## *Exercises for Developing the Awareness of Feelings*

THE FOLLOWING IS INTENDED AS A MODEL for one possible approach for filling the “Missing Link” in the early school experience. The primary goal of these exercises is to cause the child to become aware of their own feelings, something the expression of which their own home life may not have encouraged and something the school environment does not encourage. If we can help young people to become better aware of their own feelings the result will be better musicians and for everyone else a richer awareness and participation in life—become better speakers and freer in participating in conversation, for example.

The target I have in mind for these exercises is the elementary age student, a “normal” student without specific training in music. I am assuming that the student, even without training in music, will be innately able to distinguish differences in pitch. For example, given one pitch and then another, is the second pitch higher or lower than the first one? If a child at first refuses to answer, or if one child in a group refuses to participate, this should not be a fundamental concern at the beginning for that child is still hearing the focus on feeling which is the educational purpose here and not judging the correctness of their answer.

In doing an exercise remember our purpose is to help the child focus on awareness of their feelings. The teacher should always keep asking, “What did you feel this time?” The exact words in an answer should not be an obstacle for the training because the words are in the left hemisphere and we are working on the right hemisphere, which is to say, feelings cannot be expressed in words anyway, even in the most experienced adults. So the teacher should take whatever feelings or comments the student makes and work from there.

I recommend the teacher use solfège, in major, not in minor, and without respect to actual pitches; just use “Do, Mi, Sol” in an appropriate vocal range for the child. Relative pitch is all we need and in the beginning even precise pitch relationships should not be a concern, just that the child can imitate the direction of one pitch from

another. Our focus is in getting the student simply to become aware of the differences in the pitches, together with an awareness of their feeling. We are not concerned with the actual pitches the student may produce, although unknown to the student we are at the same time involved in beginning ear training. Wait a while before surprising them with the famous song from *The Sound of Music*.

I recommend not using numbers for the exercises, thinking that all children already know their numbers one through ten, because the use of numbers invites the left brain to interfere. Solfège provides a more pure vowel sound and the child should be able to learn these few symbols.

Following is my suggestion on how to begin this fundamental goal in helping the student to become aware of their own emotions. I begin with a simple triad. The comments in brackets are the “universal” feelings associated with these diatonic movements as found by Cooke (*The Language of Music*) after studying several centuries of actual scores. But, again, it is important to take whatever the student feels and work from there. This is not a test.

### *Do–Mi–Sol [Outgoing joy or happiness]*

TEACHER: Sings Do–Mi–Sol slowly and then asks the student to imitate this after the teacher sings it again.

TEACHER: Very good! Now can you sing it again and this time tell me if you feel anything as you sing it.

Once more, the teacher accepts anything the student says if it suggests they were actually thinking about their feeling as they sang. You may need to repeat this first step several times with encouragement until the student responds with identifying some feeling.

TEACHER: That’s very good. Now let’s try moving our arms up while we are singing this. Demonstrate. Then try with the student joining you.

TEACHER: Did moving your arms change or add to your feelings while you sang? (should make the feeling stronger)

TEACHER: Can you think of any words you might add to these notes? (If the result has been some sort of “joy,” for example, the teacher might suggest a reference to the student’s mother, “I love you!,” or “I love school,” etc.) and have the student try this.

### *Optional Variations*

The teacher should always be asking about changes in feelings or new feelings.

- Do–Mi–Sol–Mi [could be an added sense of satisfaction]
- Do–Mi–Do [brooding or doubt]

Teacher introduces the 2nd and 4th scale steps, Re and Fa

- Do–Re–Mi [timid joy]
- Do–Re–Mi–Fa–Sol [a stronger feeling of joy?]
- Do–Mi–Sol–La–Sol [an added sense of innocence or a feminine quality, like Humperdinck's, "Fourteen angels guard my sleep"]

More Possible Figures, from the upper Do moving down

- Do–Ti [longing]
- Do–Ti–La–Sol [consoling, a feeling of peace]

### *Next level possible projects*

1. Introduce notation on soprano clef, no accidentals (visually C major, regardless of the actual pitch you have been using in the range of the students).
2. Give the student the text, "I have a dog at home" or some descriptive text and ask them if they could create the notes/pitches to represent this on the staff?
3. Have the student think of a line of text and notate it (They are now a composer!)

### *Coda*

The goal of these exercises is to introduce the student to the idea of thinking about their own feelings. If successful their awareness of their own feelings will become part of their self-identity which they will carry forward.