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21M.542

Forum III Response

Lockwood and Tapscott both gave presentations that delineated the history of time in music and visual art respectively. The stories behind these historical figures were so intriguing. They were human after all. Dietrich Winkel invented the metronome in 1812, but Johann Malzel copied the invention, patented it, and solicited endorsements from multiple composers in 1816. Leland Stanford made a \$25k bet (\$500k in today's money value) that while in motion, a horse had all 4 hooves off the ground. He engaged Muynbridge to solve the problem photographically. Muynbridge used a series of trip wires that would be set off by the horses and would automatically trigger the camera to photograph that instance in time.

A debate that characterized the introduction of the metronome into the musical world was that of the traditionalists vs. modernists as Professor Lockwood put it. The traditionalist view of music was that the meaning of the content mattered the most while the modernists viewed a musical score and its prescribed tempo as the purest form of representation. These two schools of music philosophy lead to mostly slight but occasionally drastic differences in character of the performance of the same piece.

The science of tempo arose during Beethoven's time. Greater attention was paid to apparatuses such as meter, tempo marking, and note value. What I find interesting is the role reversal between musical interpretation of time and cinematic interpretation of time.

At the advent of the production of film, music was so much more advanced, and logically so, as music has had a head start in development over a span of centuries. The

concept of film began with the use of multiple stop action photographs. Discrete, equal unit of time were used to photograph the motions of different animals and humans. The rapid sequential review of the still images enabled the medium of film to take shape and flourish as an art form. As we see in modern film, directors have taken more liberal interpretations of time. Instead of reliance on discrete units, time is manipulated to speed up and slow down. Time is not only controlled by the producers of film but also by the viewers of film. Producers and viewers have the ability to fast forward, rewind, or put into slow motion the images on the screen. Manipulation of time in film is common practice. If we take a closer look at the traditionalists vs. modernists' debate, we see that the modernists advocated for strict interpretation of time prescribed by the pulse of the double weighted pendulum or the metronome. The traditionalists, in similar fashion with modern film producers, viewed time in a more fluid sense. The ultimate meaning behind a musical score was to provide an artistic framework for a musician to translate in his or her own sense of the piece. I believe Lockwood meant to portray the traditionalists vs. modernists' debate as a philosophical contention of an earlier era because modern musician-composers seem to take a more liberal approach to the interpretation of time. The pulse, swing, groove, phrasing, and expression of music are meant to push the boundaries of the limitations set by the rhythm of the metronome. Several world-class musicians including Mendelssohn, Wagner, Verdi, and Brahms have all criticized the metronome. It would appear as if the debate has shifted and made the modern or forward-looking musicians as the ones who shun the metronome for a freer interpretation.

Concert III Response

The two compositions that left the most memorable impact were Still's Suite for Violin and Piano and Foss's Time Cycle. The projection of the images of sculptures for the 3 movements in Still's Suite, African Dancer, Mother and Child, and Gamin provided me a visual framework that facilitated interpretation of the musical score. What also left a strong visual impact was the violinist Harumi Rhodes' body movements as she performed the piece. The interpretation of African Dancer was spectacular. Harumi seemed to dance along as the pitch progressed from low to high to low. The chords in the Mother and Child movement reminded me of the synchronization of movement between a mother and child.

The performance of Foss's Time Cycle raised the hairs on my body in a good way. The use of vocals reminded me of the Eleven Echoes of Autumn performance. The difference in Time Cycle was the unabashed use of the voice. The soprano Judith Kellock's voice was dominant in the performance, but I also paid attention to the percussion more than I usually do. Nietzsche's poem Oh Man! Take heed! transformed my mind to that of the performer as the numerical prescriptions in brackets were displayed on the projection screen.

This concert provided the most obvious use of time as a subject in music. No other musical piece performed during this Winter Festival & Forum Series had the word time in its title. The poems that were sung and the accompanying musical interpretation reinforced each other in the presentation of musical time. Overall, the concerts have made me more aware of time's role in music. All too often, I think time is a factor taken for granted by a musical performer and sometimes simply seen as a burden. However, the

skill of musician lies in his ability to take the time he is given and make something beautiful out of it. Playing with time defines music.

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