

Research Assessment #1

Date: 9/4/2020

Subject: The Emotional Effects of Music

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Scherer, K. R., & Zentner, M. R. (2001). *Emotional effects of music: Production rules*. In P. N. Juslin & J. A. Sloboda (Eds.), *Series in affective science. Music and emotion: Theory and research* (p. 361-392). Oxford University Press

Assessment:

The goal for us musicians, in the simplest way of putting it, is to bring about emotion in our listeners. While listening to music, whether live or on a recorded track, one's emotional responses are dependent on multiple factors. The listener's cultural background, listening environment and emotions, as well as the performer's skill and presence have a great effect on the experience of listening. These factors are combined with the structural features of the music in order to change one's mood.

At my first consideration of these ideas, Mozart, who is remembered and cherished to this day for his "powerful" and "moving" performances, came to mind. Mozart conducted some of the best musicians of Europe in beautiful theatres, and did so for the rich and the nobility, who were culturally molded to appreciate this sort of music and who paid immense amounts of money to witness his genius. All of these factors - Mozart's talent, a beautiful environment, incredible musicians and an invested audience - combined to create elaborate and powerful emotions in the audience's mind. While I might've known prior to this that the aspects of one's listening experience changes their emotions, seeing it put into words and involved in a scientific process changed my perspective on music.

During the process of producing, a musician such as myself must keep these aspects in mind if they want to affect the emotions of their audience. However, there is little I can do to

control one's listening environment or cultural background when creating and distributing music digitally, so my music needs to be remarkable in its quality and emotional appeal. A song can create a strong emotion, but if it isn't one that is wanted or needs to be felt, nobody will enjoy it. Creating emotionally appealing music can be achieved (partially) with a knowledge of music theory, which is somewhat of a weak point for me. While it might not be as entertaining as writing music or playing songs, I need to invest more of my free time in learning music theory in order to have the necessary knowledge. Also, I may be able to find my "niche" of listeners by utilizing social media communities and other online resources. This would solve the issue of appealing to people's cultural backgrounds.

During the creative process, however, it is vital that I stay true to my identity. In order to create good music a musician uses their own emotion, and it comes through when you listen to it. In striving to appeal to an audience, a musician's work degrades because they are not creating for themselves. In my opinion, The Beatles are a great example of musicians staying true to their identity. Ringo did not write "Yellow Submarine" for anybody other than himself and his bandmates. Songs like "Yellow Submarine", along with "Polythene Pam", "Maxwell's Silver Hammer" and "Back In The U.S.S.R" show The Beatles' disregard for their audience's expectations and their willingness to experiment for their own sake.

In conclusion, this information taught me about the experience of a listener and what control an artist has over it. Modern day artists, especially during the days of COVID-19, must differentiate themselves by appealing to listeners through experimentation and eliciting new sorts of emotions. As Coco Chanel once said, "In order to be irreplaceable one must always be different".