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## SOUND OF MUSIC

A turning point? Can we have a wedding ceremony, see a football game, worship in a church, buy groceries, quiet a child, have a funeral, dance the night away, go to the Met, lull a baby to sleep, have a birthday party, go to the dentist, be a teenager, get better production from chickens and dairy cows, or have our hair coiffed - without music? We are surrounded by music today in every form and in every part of our lives. In fact, while sorting clothing for a rummage sale recently a friend remarked, "Isn't this heavenly - no music- I am sick of having music thrown at me everywhere I go." For me, the music is a pleasure and does encourage me to hum along, except for the "music of the malls" that is designed to inspire a younger generation. The above examples are just a partial list of the events in our lives that are accompanied by music. You can easily think of many more as I read.

I cannot play an instrument - beyond the scales on the piano - I cannot sing many true notes despite some gleeclub training in my teens - and I cannot even correctly identify many musical pieces classical or popular, but I love music. Totally unaware, I had grown up in a family who had no particular interest in music, although we had a piano. When I went away to school at 14 I was astounded and dismayed to find during the "fun" Saturday morning equivalent of "Can You Name That Tune" that all of my contemporaries could name every tune and after only a few bars adeptly played by Miss Friskin on the piano. Where could they have gained such tremendous knowledge? They must be geniuses. That really has no bearing on this paper whatsoever. However, later that fall a very perceptive administrator suggested

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I take the chartered bus to Boston one Sunday afternoon and hear the Boston Symphony. To get away from school and go to Boston was reason enough. Little did I know what was in store for me. That afternoon Charles Munch conducted Tchaikovsky's Pathetique, followed by Beethoven's Pastorale. A turning point? I was mesmerized. I eagerly wrote home and it was agreed I could attend on a regular basis.

Well, that was my beginning but what about the beginning of music. Where was it, what was it, when was it? And of course, the answer is, no one knows. And this could be the end of this paper. But I had a theory that a cave mother who was trying to soothe her baby to sleep gently rocked her baby and cooed like a dove. Surely they tried to imitate the birds beautiful notes even though their voices were bound to have been guttural in nature. You notice I said HAD a theory because as I began reading histories of music my theory was discredited by almost everyone. If that premise had been true our music would warble.

The consensus seems to be that man noticed <sup>that</sup> the pitch of his voice changed. That it raised when he became excited, perhaps hunting an animal, or was lowered if he was depressed, when his fire went out. Of course, he was aware of the sounds of the animals and all of nature around him. Waterfalls, rippling brooks, the wind in the trees, the sounds of the sea, the rattle of seed pods are all musical at times. Sound is a mental impression until man shapes it and organizes it. This is a digression but do you think a tree falling in the forest makes a sound if man is not there to hear it?

Music is an expression of man's innermost feelings, his heart. You can't see it as a painting, or feel it as a piece of sculpture. You have to hear it. It often touches that chord in us that brings us to tears or perhaps laughter, or as in a march, we feel pride. Always an emotional experience.

Even a dog reacts to joy with a sharp bark as opposed to the growl of danger, or a cat purrs for joy - their forms of music - a cow lows in contentment, and our birds seem to sing sometimes for sheer ecstasy.

One history I read was written in 1819 by Thomas Busby. I quote, "In contemplating the origin of music, a writer finds himself upon the margin of a boundless and unknown ocean, an ocean in which he fears to launch because he has for his guide neither compass, chart, nor polar star." He did agree with me that the notes of birds could not but excite human imitation. That vocal music is a gift of nature. As I read other sources it becomes apparent that the science of music, ethnomusicology, has only emerged in the last 40 years. The first history of music is perhaps the one written in the 2nd century A.D. by the younger Denys of Halicarnassus in 56 volumes. It was condensed a century later to only five volumes.

In the early legends and writings all music was attributed to the Gods. Mr. Busby told how Mercury was walking along the banks of the Nile after the flood waters had receded. He kicked the dried shell of a tortoise and from that conceived the idea of a lyre. The bow, forerunner of the lyre, is the first instrument to be documented. There is a painting on the wall of the Trois Frères Cave which shows a man with a bow chasing two reindeer, probably trying to capture them with soothing music. Actually the bow served two purposes as ~~the~~ man OF COURSE hunted with it too. The Chinese have a story that a man was sent to find music. In a far off secluded valley he found bamboo. He cut a piece and blew into it and it sounded two notes. Then two birds flew over. Each sang six different notes. He then cut more bamboo and upon blowing into them they sounded like the birds. He brought the bamboo to his master and that was how music was discovered.

The Hebrews take their origin of music from the Bible. In Genesis, Jubal is the seventh generation descended from Cain. He is the "father of all such as handle the harp and the organ."

Even in the 13th century a Dominican monk noted that many still thought the Gods Linus, Thebeus, Zelus, and Amphion were all responsible for the beginnings of music. They still thought music had supernatural qualities although by this time music had evolved with scales and form. Pythagorus, the mathematician who gave us the multiplication tables and also the foundation of music theory, was so revered he was given a God-like status. One story relates how drunken sailors excited into a frenzy by Bacchic music were trying to force open the door of an honest woman. Pythagorus, who was walking by, ordered his flute player to play a slow solemn hymn. The sailors were instantly calmed. There are several stories of this nature about Pythagorus.

But to go back to the cave man and the true origins of music. Yehudi Menuhin narrated an eight part TV series for the Canadian Broadcasting Co., designed "to increase your awareness and appreciation of the miracle of music and how it influenced all mankind throughout the ages." In 1979 he expanded it into a fascinating book. His first chapter is titled the "Quiver of Life". The heart beat is our primary form of rhythm and it is always with us. Music perhaps gives back this pulse of life. In an experiment human heartbeats were played to newborns. In some instances they were so comforted and lulled they almost stopped breathing. When we hold babies close to us they feel that heartbeat that was their rhythm <sup>AND SECURITY</sup> for nine months.

Menuhin noted that the cave man survived by his ability to hear. It certainly is important for us today but not as critical to our physical survival. On the South African plains of the Kalahari the

light and air are so translucent the natives can hear for miles. It enables them to detect the movement of game at a great distance. Without our racket of automobiles and machinery, the cave man could hear too. He listened to the sounds of nature to protect his family. He could hear the fluctuations in the human voices and translated their meaning. In order to communicate over distances he beat on bones. The oldest known are mammoth bones of 35,000 years ago found in Siberia. They are hip and shoulder bones with markings where the best resonances should be. ~~They~~. They also found two small bone flutes with four holes above and two below which implies they used two hands and had some sort of musical scale. This was long before the Ice Age. ~~Do~~ PERHAPS ~~you think~~ this was the first orchestra? On other sites carved stone drum shells have been found. They no doubt had skins stretched across them. It would follow that if they had instruments they surely would accompany this with their voices. However, there is some anthropological evidence that perhaps music came before speech. Some skeletons have marks of ligaments on them which further this theory. To chant you only need lungs and vocal chords but to speak you need to coordinate the mouth and tongue. There is evidence the voice was used 80,000 years ago but chanting appeared half a million years ago.

Throughout recorded history music has always played a special part in our lives as it does today so one can imagine how important it was to the first men and women who had so few thoughts except to survive. Whether speech or music came first is relatively unimportant except perhaps to the ethnomusicologists. The fact is from the cave paintings, and the drawings on later pieces of pottery, they did have music. And the music of today is the evolution of sound from the first hunting bow that was twanged for pleasure.

The bow and the bones were used ingeniously. The cave man identified closely with the game he was hunting. Except for needing the meat and skins to survive he felt a kinship with the animals. So it was with guilt that he killed them. In ancient Siberia when a slain bear was brought in it was greeted with a song of forgiveness. As you have seen in drawings some hunters wore masks like the animal - partly to deceive them but also because they felt the strong relationship to them. The leader of these first hunters would play sounds or music on a bone of the same species of animal they were hunting. When the animal heard this he would realize the hunter had him in his power. There is a myth of the "Singing Bone" of a murdered man. When the bone was played it gave forth the story in song of the murder and the identity of the murderer. So bones were considered to hold power or magic. Maybe they are magic since we are piecing together from them what happened 35,000 years ago. It is incredible.

As well as bones and bows the early instruments were hollowed out logs. Not like canoes but the inner wood was extracted through a narrow slit so it became a hollow instrument. Probably the first large amplifier was an open pit with a beam across and refined by adding an enormous vine or string over it to be plucked or struck. In Vietnam they tuned slabs of stone by careful chipping. Some African tribes preferred rasping, buzzing sounds instead of the twang, or staccato of a drum. In Australia the aborigines still use a bullroarer (one of the cave man's instruments). It is an oblong piece with a cutting edge attached to a thong or rope which makes a deep whistling sound when swung around the head. It can be heard for miles. Other amplifiers were gourds, and shells of animals, such as the armadillo. Flutes and horns were made from hollowed bones or animal horns. Green branches of

the willow still are used as flutes in Scandinavia. Bamboo was utilized, and clay was used as early as the Stone Age. The ocarina is a dried clay flute. By the late Stone Age there were pan pipes - a series of single tone pipes. The Chinese arranged the pipes in a circle. The South Africans had pan pipe orchestras. The Arabs used flutes from wood. The Jews used the ram's horn. Every culture had their own specialities according to what materials were available. In the Near East the vibrating reed became prevalent. It would seem that when the Ice Age ended the water level rose creating the proper conditions for the growth of reeds. After the Paleolithic Age there were what are now considered the first civilizations. The Babylonians, Sumerians, and Egyptians. They began to blend tin and copper to form bronze. Two silver trumpets dated 1320 B.C. were found in King Tut's tomb in 1924, and by 500 A.D. brass instruments were being made. And each one of these is a refinement that evolved from the first hunting bow and the animal bone.

In the same way vocal music has progressed from the first guttural utterances to the inspiring tones of Placido Domingo, to whom I am listening as I write this. Or it could be Joan Sutherland or Luciano Pavarotti or so many others. Have you ever thought about the fact that our ears are never at rest. Our eyes have lids but our ears are on duty all the time even as we sleep. It was the last sense to develop and yet how acute the ears of early man must have been. It is our memory that allows man to put sound and meaning together. And of course some sounds are more pleasant and meaningful to one than the other. We have become accustomed to sounds of trains and machinery but they must have been very offensive when they were first invented. In fact, we are so attuned to noise that Menuhin suggests it may be plausible <sup>AT THIS TIME</sup> to have a composition for solo violin in concert with traffic noise.

Well, early man did not have traffic. But it is evident he felt the strong influences of life's vibrations, the exultation of successes, and the desire to thank and revere whomever or whatever kept him secure. And the most natural mode of expression was a singsong chant, a clapping of hands, swaying of the body in a repetitive rhythm, and twanging his bow or beating on a bone. Children today use the same rhythms. They repeat simple phrases and use the same physical expressions.

For a rapid and rudimentary and incomplete accounting of music to our present day we proceed from the primitive forms of early music to the Greeks who had music concerts before the Pan Hellenic games. Some of the titles of songs known to Socrates and Aristotle were "The Piglet", "The Itch", "The Snort", and "Stealing the Meat". The Greeks chanted while reciting poetry so the melody was of an orator rather than that of a singer. The Romans were administrators, not innovators in the art world, and continued to use the Greek forms of music. We do know that Nero fiddled, and that at the time Rome was a meeting place of all the countries - Egypt, Africa, Persia, Central Europe, <sup>THE</sup> Gauls, and Bretons - and each brought their own form of music. The Christians introduced the plainsong expressing their faith. The Jewish religion did not allow the individual to express themselves but they contributed the Psalms of David which were song in two parts in alternation. When Christian music was recognized it was inevitable that some pagan influences would creep in so St. Ambrose established modes and scales for the proper way to sing. This was all still by memory. 200 years later Pope Gregory made <sup>MORE</sup> refinements. We are familiar with Gregorian Chants. It was not until the 10th century that a monk in Italy, Guido Arezzo, wrote the Hymn to St. John. He adopted a way of writing the syllables on lines that followed degrees of pitch. The choir boys began learning more quickly and Guido was sent for by the Pope.



We know about the minstrels and troubadors who wandered from court to court singing the news of the land. The Crusades furthered the circulation of different music, bringing the Indian music back to England. Ravi Shankar has reintroduced this early music to the public. Menuhin says Indian music is like a river constantly flowing whereas western music is like constructing a building - more of an emotional wringer.

In the 1400s there were two musicians who brought further order and logic into writing music. John Dunstable was English and Guillaume Dufay was French. They wrote for multiple voices and that was the real beginning of western music as we know it today. By the end of the 16th century printed musical scores were available.

There had been few musical instruments prior to the 1500s but during this century they began to proliferate. Each gentleman played the lute and each gentlewoman played the harpischord. Princes collected as many kinds of instruments as they could to be played at court. For the next 300 years most masterpieces of western music were composed for these instruments.

The Italians were spirited and steeped in their Catholic Mass, so it is not surprising that the first opera, "Orfeo", was composed by Claudio Monteverdi in 1607. The ritual of the mass was almost like an opera at that time. By 1697 Venice alone had 16 opera houses, all publicly supported. Whereas in America in 1640 the Bay Psalm Book was all the Puritans could produce.

By the 18th century the expressions of the individual became important and the great composers emerged. Skipping to our own century, the 1930's produced the extravaganzas of musicals on stage and in the movies, making one forget the hard times. A black flute player remarked that he played when he was alone to drive away his troubles. The

Rock concerts have created the same frenzy of the ancient rhythms enabling the participants to dominate the Gods themselves - to be outside themselves. And each of these musicians, whether Pope Gregory, Beethoven, or the Beatles, is using a base of the music that was first sounded by the caveman. Each one is expressing that innermost vibration that is such a vital part of all of our lives.

As I finish I am struck once again by the extraordinary paths that one takes when writing one of these papers. One never knows what turns it will take and that makes it fun.

Now I have a tape to play for you that is a composite of ~~the~~ some of the music that one hears in America today. It may prove to be an exercise, <sup>IN FRUSTRATION ARE</sup> since there <sup>ARE</sup> only snatches of each type that I have chosen. And as you will hear it is not a complete representation by any means.

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## MUSIC

1. Dixieland Jazz  
"At The Jazz Band Ball" The Dukes of Dixieland
2. Musical History of the Naval Action of WW II  
"The Song of the High Seas" from Victory at Sea Richard Rogers
3. Bluegrass-(non electrified instruments)  
"Flint Hill Special" Earl Scruggs
4. Marching  
"Stars and Stripes Forever" John Phillip Sousa
5. Sacred Choral  
"Hallelujah Chorus" from "The Messiah" Handel
6. Classical  
Symphony No. 6 "The Pathetique" Tchaikovsky
7. Cowboy Song  
"The Old Chisholm Trail" Bob Atcher
8. Dance Band Music of the Swing Era - Jitterbug  
"In The Mood" Stan Rubin and His Big Band
9. Black Group Singing  
"I Don't Want to Set the World on Fire" The Ink Spots
10. Broadway Musical  
"My Fair Lady" Overture Lerner, Loewe, Hart
11. 1971 Rock  
"Morning Has Broken" Cat Stevens
12. Children's Song  
"Rummy Dummy Line" Marjorie Bennett
13. Opera  
"Carmen" Prelude Georges Bizet
14. Waltz  
"Roses from the South" Johann Strauss