

Today I listen to an extraordinary pianist play several beautiful musical pieces. His performance was inspiring and at the same time enlightening. Having learned to play the piano at young age I know that to become a good pianist you have to practice hard and be enthusiastic for your study. There is, on the other hand, so much you will have to take for consideration to become a great pianist and a musician. Today I saw a pianist perform a musical piece that to me seemed to take a lot of physical energy from the performer. His finger movements and the body language told me that the music demanded a great effort from the performer to portray the meaning of the musical piece.

Song or a composition is created from an idea of the composer. The composer has certain ideas how the composition should sound and the composer's talent, feelings and thoughts, influences the outcome. We cannot be sure in what state of mind or place in life the composer was when he created the musical piece. We can although be sure that the composer wanted to share something through the sound of music therefore the composition has a meaning. It has a great meaning for the composer just as a poem has a great meaning for the poet or the novel has a great meaning for the writer.

The role of the pianist is to interpret the meaning of the music with the help of the instructions on the musical sheet. He has to learn the notes, the silences and the emphasis in each part of the musical piece. The Pianist is therefore similar to an actor that portrays a character in a play. The actor needs to learn the role of the character, his lines, and his personality to ultimately become the person he is portraying. If the actor succeeds in his role the line between him and the character becomes invisible and the audience will stop to pay attention to the actor and only see the performance. I think this can be easily transferred to the pianist and the music he plays. If the pianist succeeds in his role the line between the pianist and the composition becomes invisible and the only thing the audience experience is a performance that delivers the true meaning of the music.

The problem is that not every audience is capable to receive the meaning of the music. For sure everyone can relate to music based on his or her own feelings and

thoughts, but I doubt the true meaning of the music the composer was trying to put forward can be easily recognized unless you have studied both the composer's background and his work. In some cases our interpretation of the music can come close to the true meaning, but our interpretation will never be neutral. When I look at a painting my interpretation of the subject is based on my own knowledge. If I do not know the background of the painter the meaning of the painting will only be what I decide it to be, but if I know at least something about the painter and his state of mind when he created the painting I can put that knowledge into my interpretation and therefore come closer to the real meaning of the painting.

My role as an audience listening to a musical piece is nonetheless important to the music and the performer. The audience needs to interact with the performance to complete the composition. Sound has no meaning if no one is able to hear it and music is therefore meaningless if no one will be able to enjoy it. When listening to a musical performance you are taking a sonic journey and the performer is your tour guide. The performer leads you through the music from the beginning to the end and leaves you with the satisfaction the musical landscape brings you. The performer and the audience share a bond through the music. Live music is for sure much more influential than listening to music on your iPod. Live performance has the capacity to deliver the musical meaning directly to your senses not only to your ears, but also to your eyes and touch. Live performance is more personal, closer to the origin of the music and therefore more effective to our experience.