

Meaning in music

Using today's concert-lecture as a point of departure, please write a two-page essay in which you reflect upon the possible ways that meaning may – or may not! – be negotiated between musician and audience in the act of performance.

To begin with I think it is interesting to think about it, if and why listening to a live concert is a different experience than listening to a CD. Most people, I think would agree with me that at least it is different. What you perceive in a concert is something a little more intimate and genuine than when you listen to a CD. But why is that? Is it because the sound is different or has it something to do with the connection that seems to occur between the performer and the audience and the music being what connects. In my opinion there has to be some kind of connection between the audience and the performer and in a way the musician must be able to send a kind of a message to audience with his performance. Today's concert made me think a lot about what William was thinking and how he was interpreting the music and if I was receiving any of it. I think that some of it obviously did but I also think that even though some people said that it was worse to know too much about the piece before you heard it, it might be necessary. When I listen to classical music I find that it enriches the experience to know a little bit about the work and especially if it has a story to tell. So what I think is possible to transmit with the music is a lot but I do think I need some information or knowledge to be able to fine tune into the interpretation of the performer. For me music is in a way a different kind of language that everybody can understand but yet has more possibilities if you study it. However, this comparison with language does not explain how I can relate so much more with the music when I am at the concert listening to it live. For example the concert I heard today was a great experience and I am sure that if I were to listen to the same music on a CD I would not have had that experience. There seems to me that there are three ways to be able to interpret a meaning from music. One, not try to get any meaning from it and just simply enjoy and try to give you the sensation that you are experiencing the "now" and it does not have to mean anything or be a specific feeling or idea. Here the performer enhances that sensation of t

Meaning in music

well being if he plays with his heart. Two, there can be a meaning in the music that is very clear and a story to be told that if you simply explain to the audience how it is and try to give them maximum information so that when you listen to it you know exactly what meaning is supposed to be transferred from the musician to the audience. In this case the performer is a storyteller and if he gets the message thru in the most accurate way, his mission is accomplished. Three, here there is a totally open field of interpretation so that the audience is absolutely in the dark as of what is supposed to be the meaning of the music. In this case the interpretation of the meaning of the music depends both on the musician and the audience. If the musician has a talent for interpretation and the audience has an ear for music they can practically talk to each other. This conversation however depends on the “linguistic” skills of the audience as well and I think it can be trained just as any other language. Here it is important to try to separate the very western idea of the separation of the rational mind and feelings. Maybe it is difficult for us to explain the meaning of music because of the heavy separation of feelings and sensible rational thought that is in our language. Maybe if we were to speak to each other using different ways to express ourselves we would be able to talk to each other with music. For that we need good interpreters and teachers of the language of music.