THE SUBJECTIVE

WHAT DOES MUSIC SAY? (The Purpose of Music, on its own terms)

- Music with text (words, lyrics) - whatever the words say. **The music amplifies words.**
  [http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=U4lJuZrgSJA](http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=U4lJuZrgSJA)

- Music without text:
  - A descriptive title may clue one into what the music attempts to portray.
  - Annotations left by the composer may be very specific as to what the music is conveying.
  - Knowledge of the composer's life circumstance under which the music was created can be telling.

On the other hand, often there are no clues aside from the music itself. Music speaks a "language," consisting of no words at all, only music. Each style of music has its own language. To understand the language, one must listen, that is really listen. Eventually, or even immediately, it may speak to the listener. Music on its own can be very articulate...

**The Expressive Aspects of Music:**

*Emotion*

*The Human Spirit*

*The Intellect*

*A Physical Environment*
Emotion

Music is not by itself emotional, people are. It can however, portray, or be the device with which a composer and/or performer can express his/her emotions. Probably every possible human emotion and state of mind can be expressed by music.

_Tchaikovsky: Symphony No. 6, 3rd Movement_

[http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=N40h_NUwy4k](http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=N40h_NUwy4k)

![Boston Red Sox win the World Series](image)

_A woman finds the name of her son, killed at the World Trade Center on September 11, 2001._

_Tchaikovsky: Symphony No. 6, 4th Movement_

[http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=DtLq8wj0p80](http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=DtLq8wj0p80)
the Human Spirit
Above and beyond the material, mundane, mechanistic, and merely emotional.

Music can reflect the composer's view of, and/or reaction to his/her life/society, and his/her embracing it/rising above it/surrender to it.

The most intimate reflections of a composer’s spirit, the very core of the indescribable self of the composer can be experienced through his/her music.

A composer’s style is a direct reflection of his/her personality.

Shostakovich: Symphony No.5, IV
http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=oglFXqYEYd8
the Intellect

Music often consists of patterns of sound, sometimes extremely complex and rigorously constructed by the composer. The Intellect in music is the listener's reaction to the composer's craft, and his/her achievement of a finely wrought composition.

Composers often attempt to achieve the "perfect" balance between the intellectual and the emotional, or the "head and the heart." Each composer ends up having his/her own, often very different idea of what that is. Music that results from a purely intellectual exercise can sometimes sound just that way. Yet, there is emotional import, but it is very subtle, sometimes even sublime - it is often contained only within the intellectual rigor of composition of the music. The result of an intellectual endeavor can also be seen as an expression of the Human Spirit.

_Bach: Art of Fugue: Contrapunctus I_
[http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Lrb0dHKJBR4](http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Lrb0dHKJBR4)

_Auguste Rodin, The Thinker_

_The Golden Gate Bridge under construction_
A Physical Environment
Music can attempt to describe a physical environment or state of being with almost visceral effect. Musical imitations of applicable sounds are an important expressive device.

*Ravel: Daphnes et Chloe Suite No. 2*

http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=9VH90dvybvc

Elizabeth Jane Gardner, "Daphnis and Chloe," 1882
HOMEWORK

Listen to **Wagner: Liebestod from Tristan und Isolde**

http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=665lMKUB1xc

What is *really* being portrayed?
Take notes on your impressions.

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Mildly and gently,
how he smiles,
how the eye
he opens sweetly ---
Do you see it, friends?
Don’t you see it?
Brighter and brighter
how he shines,
illuminated by stars
rises high?
Don’t you see it?
How his heart
boldly swells,
fully and nobly
wells in his breast?
How from his lips
delightfully, mildly,
sweet breath

softly wafts ---
Friends! Look!
Don’t you feel and see it?
Do I alone hear this melody,
which wonderfully and softly,
lamenting delight,
telling it all,
mildly reconciling
sounds out of him,
invades me,
swings upwards,
sweetly resonating
rings around me?
Sounding more clearly,
wafting around me ---
Are these waves
of soft airs?
Are these billows

of delightful fragrances?
How they swell,
how they sough around me,
shall I breathe,
Shall I listen?
Shall I drink,
immerse?
Sweetly in fragrances
melt away?
In the billowing torrent,
in the resonating sound,
in the wafting Universe of the
World-Breath ---
drown,
be engulfed ---
unconscious ---
supreme delight