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MUSIC – THE SOURCE OF CREATIVITY

The perpetually recurring question at the beginning of the new century is the question of the future of mankind. Will the so-called ‘human dignity’ be able to survive in the world of technology? Are human beings to be standardized and automated, or will the society of the future consist of individuals, who possess the social strength of giving and taking?

120 years ago, slavery was abolished for good. Today we are threatened by the slavery of the future – humanity as the slave of technology. On the one hand, technology contributes to lighten and unburden countless daily activities. But, on the other hand, it has become a threat, a veritable existential assault on the very core of human life. At this point in time, we must ask: Which are the areas where the importance of technology for the future development of the world can not be questioned, and which are the areas, where technology can prove disastrous to mankind? When is technology appropriate, and when is it not? Which type of communication is critical when it comes down to the nitty-gritty, to the lifeblood of our existence? Communication through technology, or man to man? Is there an unequivocal answer to that?

In our day and age, everyone must take a stand, and not least those who are responsible for shaping the future: representatives of state, of the financial world, and of diverse branches of science.

Reflections of this kind are nothing new. Time and again, philosophers, sociologists, psychologists, theologians, educationalists, politicians and others have voiced their ideas in this respect. But what can a musician say on this subject?

Goethe once said:

”Wer Musik nicht liebt,
verdient nicht,
ein Mensch genannt zu werden;
wer sie nur liebt,
ist erst ein halber Mensch;
wer sie aber treibt,
ist ein ganzer Mensch.”

”He who loves not music
deserves not
the name of man;
he who loves it,
is yet but half a man;
but he who devotes himself to it,
is a whole man.”

Could musical activity be a path to the ‘complete’ human being, and why exactly should music be able to steer us on to the right path?

Most people today are not aware of the fact that the medium of music – the *reality* of music – is a completely overlooked energy source. It is an energy source of the highest spiritual level which, if discovered and put to proper use, could contribute significantly, even decisively, to ensure the future of human existence.

What then is music? Is it conceivable that, say, a politician, a manager or a scientist could experience life affirmation of unconceivable dimensions through music – regardless of profession and preconceived notions?

Can Goethe’s statement on the importance of music be disregarded? Could it really be just pretty words, when Arthur Schopenhauer professes affinity to music with this statement:

“Music answers the question of life, in a manner more profound than all other art forms. It does so by expressing the inner core of all life and being in a completely tangible and understandable language – a language, however, which cannot be comprehended by reason.”

The energy source intrinsic in music cannot be explained, but can only be experienced, and, naturally, only through music. This experience reveals the laws of music which – surprisingly – express something equivalent in human nature.

The flowing power of music lives in the polarity between extroversion and introversion, in ‘major’ and ‘minor,’ in the broadest meaning of these words.

Music is life. The infinite diversity of its elements, the rise and fall of melodies, the animation and tranquillity of the rhythms, and the dissonances and consonances of harmonies constitute a constant pursuit of unity, of understanding the big picture, of balancing out discrepancies, of reaching communicational consensus between human beings. This is the only way to ‘understand’ music.

Musical appreciation means being cognizant about the power of experiencing. It means opening blocked ears. Musical appreciation can bring with it inspiration, expansion and absorption within all areas relating to human development. Music can bring about *transformation!* Musical appreciation means the rediscovery of man’s spiritual home.

The technological expansion of our time has gradually appropriated music as well. An enormous music industry and a gargantuan music market handle the turnover of the ‘commodity’ music.

Nowadays, the majority of all music comes through loudspeakers. Does this enrich or impoverish us? Should music be nothing but a consumer good – controlled by extensive, aggressive and effective marketing – simply because nobody should be denied music? Or is this spiritual rape on a large scale?

Of course there is a need to manage the current musical scene. Organized communication, with all tools at its disposal, is also an absolute necessity. But the substance of music is life, and life is not saleable. Music as ‘the core of all life and being’ is inalienable. It belongs to mankind’s deepest, most intimate, most holy and inviolable area. Therefore, any attempt on the part of technology to trespass these regions is a declaration of war on the human spirit, on the individual. The consequence of such a technological aggression would be to incapacitate personality, paralyze inner strength, foster autistic tendencies and induce a sense of isolation from other human beings. True communication is replaced by pseudo-communication. Easy access to music is propagandized. Prolonged practice on a musical instrument, after all, does require effort! So instead, by the push of a button, one can conjure up music and deliver ‘relaxation’ or ‘stimulation’ at any possible moment.

Given this scenario, where can one find musical activity? What has happened to the ‘whole man’ mentioned in the Goethe quote?

Even today, many people still play a traditional music instrument. Some practice their instrument several hours a day. Many play in an orchestra, sing in a choir, or play chamber music in diverse ensembles. Music resounds on instruments, from the highest professional level to the more modest amateur level, with sound that is wholly created by individuals. Scores of people fill concert halls, churches and other venues, where music may blossom. Here there still exists the possibility of immediate and spontaneous communication between people, freed from the tutelage of technology.

However, this does not necessarily guarantee that the life force of music actually penetrates the hearts of the performers and audience. On the contrary, traditional music-making is already being thoroughly undermined by mechanization, by the increased denial of the spiritual power of music, and by the ignorance prevailing among the representatives of the musical scene. However, the misuse of music as luxury entertainment, as a feast on shallowness, as a status symbol, or as a way to pass the time is not just a contemporary decadence, but has existed throughout the ages. A typical symptom of our time, however, is that technical perfection is fatally equated with musical substance. Music is then reduced to a mere competitive sport. The last bridges leading to a higher sphere crumble. Those still not blinded by this perfection are left high and dry and ‘expelled’ to the make-believe world of technology. As early as back in back in 1931, Wilhelm Furtwängler, the unforgettable conductor of the Berlin Philharmonic Orchestra, had warned about the disastrous consequences of making music that was adjusted to recordings, and with perfection as the only goal.

What is to be done? The possibility of experiencing music always exists, at every given moment in time. However, it is more necessary than ever before, that the focus of our efforts is music as a spiritual reality. We need to look at music in an epistemological way, and discover musical phenomena as the building blocks for the music culture of the future.

A stimulation of the musicality dormant in all human beings can be an inexhaustible source of creativity. Man can then be addressed as an artist. The future needs the artist in man!

Musical appreciation is required as a source of innovation for politicians, managers, scientists and all others, who might have missed out on the energy source that is music.

The Danish author Johannes Hohlenberg writes about this musical appreciation in his essay 'Harmonices Mundi' (from the book The Transformation of Culture):

“You can hear whether a train of thought is correct, in the same way that you hear whether a series of chords or a melody is correct. Søren Kierkegaard was such a thinker. Somewhere in his notes, he writes that he listens to his thoughts as he would to music. This means that the thoughts no longer can be measured with an external, logical yardstick. Rather, the sound and rhythm of the thoughts become the criteria for their correctness. They convince us in the same way as would a piece of music. But this ability to hear internal music has degenerated in our time, and has all but disappeared. People satisfy themselves with logic, or with something they call logic. But logic and reason can never teach us whether a chord is in tune or not, whether a transition – or a series of chords – makes sense, whether a melody expresses something or not. This only the ear can determine. By the same token, logic and reason cannot tell us whether an idea is congruent with reality, whether a plan or an undertaking is truly part of a fulfilling life. Those who have retained or acquired some of this understanding inevitably experience almost all aspects of today's public life as a horrible cacophony. People do not realize how out of tune they are, because they no longer hear the disharmonies triggered by their thoughts and actions. There are connections within the social, political and financial scenes today, which cannot be deciphered through logic and reason alone. Understanding these connections requires a *musical intuition*, which can hear what is taking place, in the same way that one hears the progression and intertwining of voices in a contrapuntal piece, and which can immediately judge whether what is happening is an accordance with the hidden idea behind the events.”

Music exists to make human beings human. In 'The Merchant of Venice,' William Shakespeare expresses it thus:

”The man that has no music in himself,
Nor is not moved with concord of sweet sounds,
Is fit for treason, stratagems and spoils;
The motions of his spirit are dull as night,
And his affections dark as Erebus:
Let no such man be trusted!”