

Jürg Frey

Life is present

It has occurred to me that there are two ways of experiencing music. The first way is promoted by a music which draws our attention to individual phrases, details in the instrumentation and in the voice leading, and in the linking of characteristics of successive individual parts. We experience this music as though drawing breath into our body. There are those special, rare moments in which we become surprised by a unique sensation. And then after the concert we have the memory of those happy moments when we became transfixed by the music. Another possibility in listening to music occurs in pieces in which the composer has left behind the development of parts, unified by cause and effect, and replaced this with other, just as complex organizational possibilities. Often this music is completely without individual parts. Or, the formal differences can be very simple, such as those we perceive between sound and silence. When this music has individual sections, they are not developed from one to the next, or linked by contrast - rather, the individual parts appear to be tied to each other by an invisible thread. This means that each idea for a new section must be a new beginning, dialectically unconnected with the previous section. In this case, there are only the sections which occurred to the composer, and these sections bring forth the identity of the piece.

With this music, we do not have a memory of moments of particular intensity after the concert. The situation is not at all shaped by memory. There is indeed the feeling that the music is already gone. At the same time we sense that this music has not left behind the customary impressions. In place of the memory of individual events we sense rather a direct manifestation of life, a richer experience of life. It is not simply an idea; an idea appears to me as a lower category in our consciousness. It is the reality that one is alive that makes us joyful in this moment. It is the feeling that I am here and life is present. This is an unambiguous sensation, but at the same time it is very complex because it is so encompassing.

With a music that we perceive in this way, it becomes clear all at once that something is there: time. It is a music that speaks with itself and is its own audience. In this silent dialogue with itself, the music and the audience are connected. Therefore, it does not remain or turn in its own circle. In this silent dialogue with itself, the music is interwoven with silver threads. And it is with this sense of living that the room, often with a minimum of sound, is completely filled.

One of the possibilities with this experience of time is *The Expanse*. Music stretches into the future and into the past. It allows a plain to appear, spreading out in all directions. The questions are: Where are the boundaries? What are the boundaries?

Another possibility of experiencing time is *The Path*. With this we have the beginning in front of us, and the longer we stay with the piece, the more it lies behind us. In the moment when the music begins, it is heading for the end. The question here is: What holds the piece to life? Yet another possibility is *The Strophe*. Now the music repeatedly pulls past us, and we are challenged to deepen our observation, to penetrate the music by listening and to hear similar music always from another angle.

Jürg Frey, 1996

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