

Music different syyles critical essay

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Music comes in a variety of different styles. It has been written since the beginning of time, first through singing, and later through rudimentary instruments. Through the ages, instruments have continued to develop. String instruments, like violin and cello, were among the first to appear. Music has changed and grown through the years and as the styles and trends change and different instruments are invented or innovated, new genres of music are invented. While these styles are vastly different, there are also some prime similarities that remain, even today.

Bach is an early example of music. He was born in 1685 and is one of the first musicians to compose in the baroque style (the earliest period of what is typically considered "classical" music). Prior to the baroque period, instrumental music was somewhat less common and didn't have the same kinds of harmonies and sounds that people are used to today (Sadie).

Bach's music is purely instrumental, featuring strings, harpsichord, French horns, and trumpets. Bach's music typically has a classical instrumentation consisting of strings, brass (French horns, trumpets; no trombones for another 150 years), woodwinds (clarinet, flute, oboe, sometimes bassoon), and harpsichord. In his day, there was no electricity, and no electronic music. Orchestras were very small, consisting of approximately 30 to 40 members, as opposed to 60 to 80 member orchestras seen today. The Brandenburg concertos were written for even smaller ensembles, from 4 to 20 people (Sadie).

The music was also written in very straightforward, now-traditional ways. Harmonies are very traditional, although Bach liked to use some interesting harmonic shifts in his music. Muted strings are used in some places. Musical

form is frequently sonata form, binary, or ternary. Rhythms are fairly straight forward, making use of simple and complex time signatures, rarely syncopated rhythms, and very occasionally, triplets.

There were few pianos yet, either, and its predecessor, the harpsichord, was not capable of dynamic changes. The piano that did exist was brand new. “The Well-Tempered Clavier” was written to celebrate the tuning system that had recently been invented, rather than the just intonation used previously. “Well tempered” intonation allowed the piano to play in any key without being retuned, because it divided the pitches to be each exactly 100 cents (vibration frequency) apart. The previous intonation system had been based on ancient Pythagoras’s overtone series (Randel).

Bluegrass is another musical style, which originated around the 1600s, when people first began to migrate to the new world. It is a type of folk music, created by people in certain regions (often mountains). Folk music is characterized by special instruments, usually acoustic ones. Some folk music today includes the washtub-bass, the washboard, and blowing across a jar. Most folk music includes an acoustic guitar and/or a banjo, some type of bass, and often a fiddle. A fiddle is exactly like a violin, except in the way it is played. A violin often uses long melodies and rare double stops (playing two notes at the same time on one instrument), while a fiddle uses fast melodies with short notes and lots of double stops (IBMA).

Andrew McKnight is a bluegrass artist. His music is sometimes instrumental, using very typical folk instruments like acoustic guitar, fiddle, bass, mandolin, and banjo. A mandolin is actually a Spanish instrument, which shows the diverse influences that helped to create this unique style of

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music. It is not always played in such groups, but is reasonably common (IBMA).

“ June Apple” is a completely instrumental and very rapid and typical track, using fast fiddling over a running bass line and steady guitar riffs. The folk music seems similar to jazz, in that several instruments play a common chord progression and one instrument solos over it, using quick rhythms, sliding into the right note, and improvisation. It also uses a lot of double stops in the fiddle. Fiddling is really characterized by this type of soloing - use of double stops, sliding into notes, playing quite rapidly, and primarily on the higher strings. The music does not really have a standard form, besides the chord progression and soloing (IBMA).

This awareness of musical type is portrayed by McKnight’s lyrics in the other example:

Well, you take that mountain fiddle and you bow it
Then you bring in a bit of banjo for that high energy.
Add a little guitar and before you know it the music from the mountains sets
you free.

I don’t care what kind of tune you’re pickin’
Swing or folk or bluegrass sounds mighty fine to me
May the hills and hollers keep that music kickin’ and may the music from the
mountains set you free

Copyright © 2002 Dave Payton and Charlie Bowen of the musical group
called` The 1937 Flood.`

The lyrics that typically accompany bluegrass music are about everyday life, very simple things, as they are a type of country music (IBMA).

In this particular case, Andrew McKnight is a solo artist. However, in other cases, bands are made up of four or five different members, in order to cover all of the instruments named above, especially bass, guitar, banjo, and vocals.

Rock/popular music is another, and more recent musical genre. It began back in the 1950's with Elvis, and progressed into many different forms and styles (Kingwood College). Today's rock/pop music uses primarily electronic instruments, especially guitar, bass, and keyboard. The music focuses heavily on the use of drum set and guitars, and occasionally other percussion instruments. It is also almost always accompanied by vocals. These vocals may be a group of men and/or women, but are frequently solo artists with unnamed backup artists on the track (Sadie).

Persephone's Bees is a rock/pop group. It has lyrics done by a single female vocalist (with other females on back up). It includes a drum set, electric bass, electric guitar, shaker, other percussion instruments, and other electronic effects, done by a keyboard. In total, there are four members of the band. There is some dissonant vocal harmony, very typical of this style of music. Drum set is featured very prominently in different tracks, laying down the beat for entire song, and using very common rhythms, especially syncopation. Most tracks are in a steady, fast, common time, or 4/4 meter (Persephone's Bees).

There are a lot of electronic effects in this style of music, including different styles of electronic guitar, from clean to distorted; strummed to picked. All of the instruments blend most of the time, except during particular solos, creating a uniform sound. There are occasionally bass and drum solos. The song typically fits a standard style of verse/chorus/verse/chorus (repeated any number of times)/bridge/chorus.

Although there are many differences in these styles of music to highlight, there are also many similarities. For example, every one of these pieces is tonal, which means they make use of traditional harmonies (major chords, in a I-IV-V-I type progression). There are not many dissonances in any of the pieces, and the dissonances that exist are used very similarly, in the V chord.

All of these pieces are also written in a standard 4/4 meter, and not something unusual. All feature a steady beat, whether it is heavily emphasized, as in rock/pop styles, or downplayed, as in classical and bluegrass. Regardless, they all move along at a decent tempo and interest the listener.

Also, these musical styles come from similar influences. People created them all to have something nice to listen to (and to do, back in old days). Most of these styles originated in Europe or with people who came from Europe. Most of the styles have always found a willing audience, whether in a concert hall, garage band, or country fair.

In these ways and more, these musical styles are very much alike. Music is for everyone, and so it takes many forms.

Musical styles are vast and different, and have changed and evolved through the ages. Music is available today in many styles and types of all listeners. However, they have also remained much the same in key ways, simply because listeners want to hear certain kinds of music. That is, tonal music that is nice to listen to and traditional. Music is something that all people have and enjoy, in one of its many forms. In this paper are only three examples of the many different styles of music that are available.

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