

Types of music and their fundamental attractions

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There are many kinds of music, from traditional folk and art music in the very beginning, to the birth ical music during the nineteenth century and the pop music now. There are factors that lead to the success of each kind of music in each era.

Folk music belongs to the small communities in the English village of pre-industrial times. It is played or sung round the village green and used to accompany ceremonials like harvesting. The art music of the written tradition is too the music of the community, but of a very different kind. It stems from a leisured class or group that has time and learning to write down its music, and to rehearse complex and difficult works. Originally this was pre-eminently the church; after the Middle Ages it became more and more the courts of the secular nobility of Europe. As recently as the late eighteen century Haydn and Mozart wrote most of their music for performance in the private orchestras and theatres, and hence the classical composers developed their orchestral symphonies, their chamber music and operas.

It was Beethoven who completed the plans for the orchestra begun by Haydn. One of Beethoven's greatest legacies to the world is the modern orchestra. The orchestra speaks a noble language. Happiness or sorrow is in its tones. Its voice can speak of peace or war, of every thought, fear, hope grief, or joy of mankind. Because Beethoven's music had those same qualities, he wanted the orchestra to fully express them. He made the orchestra to suit the purpose of his music. Beethoven used the string choir for the heart of his orchestra. He strengthened the wood-wind choir and the brass choir. He made the tympani into living drums. In other words, he gave

the orchestra a new unity and a new power. During the great nineteenth century transition from an aristocratic and mainly agricultural society to the industrial age in which we live now men and women were herded into the factories and slums; and the traditional folk music and dancing began to die out. Classical music began to be enjoyed by a wider social class, and composers such as Mendelssohn wrote for the middle class Victorian drawing-room. A deep understanding of each of the instruments in the orchestra - their capabilities and limitations - was necessary. For the listener, at least a knowledge of the various instruments - their classification and features - is necessary.

So developed the new industry, an industry for the provision of popular music for people with little experience either in self-expression in music or the arts of any sort of cultural background, but people with a steadily increasing amount of money and leisure. In the 1950s, Elvis Presley became the icon of pop music. Elvis wasn't like the American singers of the 40s and early 50s. He wasn't neat, sweet and safe. He was rough, tough, and dangerous. His music was dangerous too. He called himself "The King of Rock and Roll" and played an electric guitar. Teenagers all over the world fell in love with this new style. They bought millions of his records. Suddenly the younger generation didn't just have money, cars and televisions - they had a hero, too. He gives pop to the youth. Pop exploded in the 60s. After Elvis, hundreds of new groups and singers appeared. Pop is a contemporary means of expression and young people identify with it readily. The lyrics are expressions of what youth wants to communicate. Rock, a kind of pop music, is characterized by an insistent beat. The backing is strong, guitar

dominated; the presentation, larger-than-life, mechanically etherealized by the use of synthesizers; the voice, self-pitying, plaintive or cathartic shouting. The repetition of music, catchy words and refrain makes for easy absorption. The fundamental attraction of rock is its beat. Young people want something to symbolize aliveness. Moreover, pop can be a guide to the adolescent who is confused by emotional and sexual questions and wants to understand relationships. Lastly, not all pop is escapist. Some, such as Bob Dylan's, are realistic, philosophical and meaningful.