

Milton babbitt



**ASSIGN
BUSTER**

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Babbitt is a man of music and mathematics. In addition to being a professional mathematician he is the Professor of Music at the Princeton University. He brought to music a scholarly, analytical and probing attitude. In his music, he set out to explore the possibilities of extending Webern's technique of pitch organization to dimensions other than pitch. He rejects the theory that a composer is duty bound to communicate with the listener. On the contrary he propounds the theory that the composer's primary obligation is to his music and its advancement and evolution. Such a composer creates a commodity that has negative market value and is little performed.

A condition of musical and societal isolation is created which gives the composer an advantageous position to forward his music. It also results in the creation of new music. The music employs a tonal quality that is more efficient than its derivatives. The increase of meaningful pitch materials and the functions associated with the musical event would be multiplied. Each event is located in a five dimensional musical space that is determined by pitch-class, register, dynamic, duration and timbre. Musical compositions under discussion possess a high degree of contextuality and autonomy. The principles of relatedness which determines the coherence of continuity are more likely to evolve in the course of the work rather than from generalized assumptions.

In many fundamental respects this music is "new". It represents a vast extension of the methods of other music. Such rooted composition elicits comparable knowledge and experience from the listener. A listener will be puzzled and bored by such a composition. This is understandable but what is

undesirable is the translation of this boredom into resentment. Advanced music reflects the knowledge and originality of the composer. It can scarcely be expected to appear intelligible to a person whose musical knowledge is less than extensive. A person with limited knowledge of music is not capable of understanding advanced music just as a layman is not equipped to make sense out of advanced mathematical theories.

Circularity seems to be the norm where criticism is concerned and personal tastes are converted based on general principles. For most critics, the music they dislike is “not music” and if they do not like the music of certain composers, then they are “not composers.” Therefore passing judgment or criticism on music is best left to professional journals. The music critic understands that whatever music is presented will finally lead to public approval or disapproval and hence by omitting the expected criticism he feels that he would be doing great injustice to the composer and thereby he himself becomes the victim in the leveling of different categories. The writer suggests that the composer should withdraw himself and his music from the public realm voluntarily to a private world of performing in order to completely eliminate the possibility of public and social scrutiny and criticism.