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Creativity, Imagination and the Mind of the Musician

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CREATIVITY, IMAGINATION AND THE MIND OF THE MUSICIAN

A THESIS

The Honors Program

College of Saint Benedict/Saint John's University

In Partial Fulfillment

of the requirements for the Distinction "All College Honors"

and the Degree Bachelor of Arts

In the Department of Music

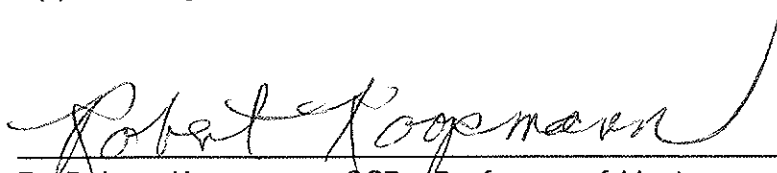
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Sarah A. Kropp

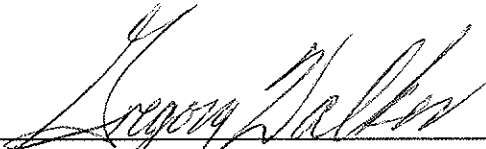
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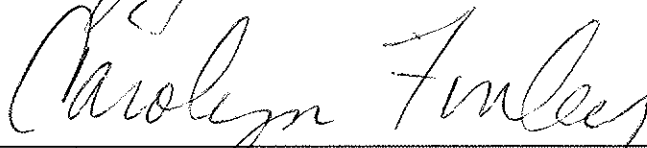
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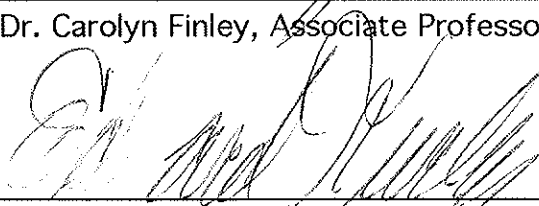
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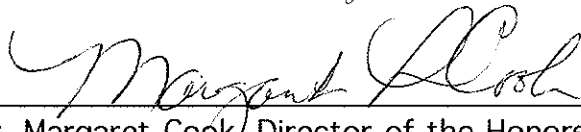


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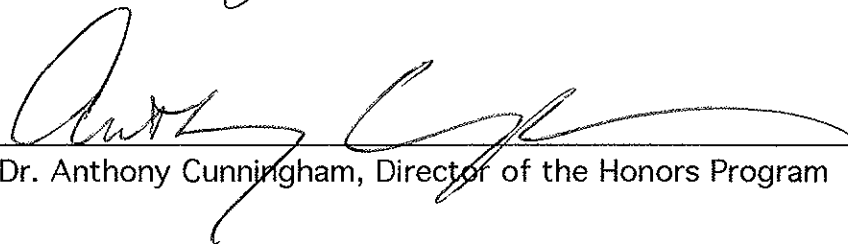


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“Creative man is a riddle that we may try to answer in various ways, but always in vain” Carl Gustav Jung (Ghiselin, 219).

Creativity is an integral function in the work of a musician. To create is to cause to exist or to bring into being. Whether the musician is a composer, a performer, or both, dependence on creativity to accomplish his/her work is an essential factor. As a composer, the musician relies on creativity to compose musical works. As a performer, the musician relies on creativity to interpret already created musical composition and to effectively communicate its message to the listening audience.

Although creativity is essential for the musician and other creative individuals, creativity and its intricate workings are difficult to define. The subject of creativity has long fostered debate amongst scholars of fine arts, literature, science and music. What is creativity? Where does it come from? Why do some individuals overflow with creative energy and create with little apparent effort while others must struggle to create?

Creators have attempted to more clearly define creativity by relating their own experiences with the creative process. Some claim to be inspired by a higher power, others reach into their subconscious and still others credit a vivid imagination for their creativity. Their responses, however, are inconclusive for the general population. Whatever the individual belief may be, what remains evident is the absence of an explicit definition applicable to all people. No one knows definitively from whom, what or where the creative energy comes or even what factors are imperative in striving for creative achievement. How creative energy can be best used by the individual

remains a mystery.

Carl Gustav Jung claimed, "...the creative act, which is the absolute antithesis of mere reaction, will forever elude the human understanding" (Ghiselin 29). Jung recognized that although he could define what creativity was not, he was unable to completely understand or define it. This essay seeks to explore the mind of one particular creator, the musician, as the creative process is experienced through composing and performing musical works. It will also consider the theories of a few individuals outside the field of music as their creative experiences compare and contrast with those of the musician. By listening to these creators and exploring their first-hand encounters with the creative process, one may more clearly define how and why the process works. In addition, this knowledge may be used to further develop one's own creative processes.

I. The Divine and Creativity/Sources of Inspiration

Where does the inspiration for the creative process come from? The varying products of creativity would suggest infinite possibilities. Each creator experiences inspiration in a different way and produces different creative results, but a number of them agree on a few common sources of inspiration including interacting with a higher power, possessing an active imagination and encountering a creative impulse.

Several composers claimed their creativity resulted from interaction with a higher power. The names for this higher power varied -- some called it a "being," others called it "God" -- but each of the composers considered this to be personal

interaction with a greater-than-human force. Johannes Brahms believed very strongly that his inspiration came from "God." For him the creation of great works was absolutely impossible without faith in God and he deplored atheist ways declaring, "No atheist has ever been or ever will be a great composer" (Abell, 21). Brahms identified very much with Ludwig van Beethoven, who also credited God for his inspiration, and much of Brahms's thinking was modeled after Beethoven's. Brahms supported his perspective on God by citing the writings of several creators with whom he identified including Milton, Shakespeare and Homer. All of these creators, like Brahms, called upon a higher power when creating. Before Homer began to relate the story of Odysseus's magnificent journey in The Odyssey, he invoked his higher power the Muse: "Sing in me, Muse, and through me tell the story of that man skilled in all ways of contending" (Homer 1). Although Homer defined his source of inspiration as "Muse" and Brahms and Beethoven called it "God," they all depended on this interaction with a higher power for creation. They were acutely aware of connecting with a force greater than themselves in order to accomplish monumental creations. Beethoven claimed, "I know that God is nearer to me than to others of my craft; I consort with him without fear" (Abell 4). This divine consortium produced superhuman results which each composer claimed he could not have accomplished alone.

Richard Strauss also credited a higher power or Divinity for his inspiration while composing. He believed this inspiration was a gift entrusted to only a few individuals. "When in my inspired moods, I have definite, compelling visions, involving a higher

selfhood. I feel at such moments that I am tapping the Source of Infinite and Eternal energy from which all things proceed. Religion calls it God" (Abell 86). Strauss marveled at the diversity of the Divine inspiration. This single source provided inspiration which Strauss could develop in many different directions. His numerous but contrasting operas including Der Rosenkavalier and Capriccio were the results of this multifaceted inspiration. The fairy tale story of Der Rosenkavalier ends happily-ever-after and resolves all conflicts while Capriccio leaves the audience in suspense. The story is never quite resolved. Together they illustrate the magnitude of diverse expression available to the composer who has been inspired by the Divine as Strauss claimed to be.

Giacomo Puccini agreed that God was the source of his inspiration, but he was unable to clearly define inspiration except by his own experience. According to Puccini, "Inspiration is something so intangible and evasive that I would not know how to define it to you...I know from my own experience when composing that it is a supernatural influence which qualifies me to receive Divine truths, and to communicate them to the public through my operas" (Abell 116). For Puccini, receiving inspiration was a very personal experience and consequently very difficult to describe to another individual. His higher power allowed him to perceive the Divine truths or inspiration and the results were his musical creations.

Writer Jean Cocteau dissented from these composers' belief in God as the source of their inspiration. Although not a composer, Cocteau does provide additional

insight into inspiration from the perspective of a fellow creator. In biting contrast to Brahms' unwavering faith in God for inspiration, Cocteau denied that inspiration comes from God and suggested instead that inspiration is the result of human shortcoming. "I do not believe inspiration falls from heaven, I think it is rather the result of a profound indolence and of our incapacity to put to work certain forces within ourselves...in short, when the work that makes itself in us and in spite of us demands to be born, we can believe that this work comes to us from beyond and is offered us by the gods" (Ghiselin 82). Cocteau seemed to suggest that we choose to believe that works come from beyond ourselves, but in reality, it comes from within. What we call inspiration is actually a part of the unconscious which we are incapable of controlling and we explain this phenomena by claiming it comes from the gods. In Cocteau's view, inspiration exists in the unconscious and when the conscious finally receives it, the inspiration takes concrete form and emerges in the creator's work, but the inspiration is not from God.

Aaron Copland, too, avoided God in his lectures on creativity and inspiration. In contrast to Brahms, Beethoven, Strauss and Puccini, Copland felt creativity was not the product of a Divine influence, but rather of a highly imaginative mind. "The more I live the life of music, the more I am convinced that it is the freely imaginative mind that is at the core of all vital music making and music listening" (Copland 17). The freely imaginative mind was essential to creative workings. While Brahms opened his mind to the suggestions of God, Copland opened his mind to the influences of his vivid

imagination so essential to creation. He felt music provided the best opportunities for the imaginative mind to create. "Music provides the broadest possible vista for the imagination since it is the freest, the most abstract, the least fettered of all the arts" (Copland 17). Although Copland was most likely biased from a musician's standpoint, he grasped the concept that in no matter what way creativity is expressed, the key to that expression is the freedom to imagine without bounds or restrictions. This perhaps is not so different from Brahms' interaction with God, for certainly Brahms needed to be of open mind to consort so freely with God as was Copland with his imagination.

Roger Sessions experienced inspiration in his compositional process as an impulse which compelled him both to begin to create and to continue creating. The impulse sometimes appeared as a brief flash and other times remained for a long time, gradually growing and developing in his mind. He was careful to differentiate between the impulse and actual musical creation. "The inspiration takes the form, however, not of a sudden flash of music, but a clearly-envisaged impulse toward a certain goal for which the composer is obliged to strive...Inspiration, then, is the impulse which sets creation in motion; it is also the energy which keeps it going" (Sessions 21-22). The impulse was not the musical work, but provided the opportunity for the composer to create a musical work. It yielded a vision or goal for the composer to reach and acted as a catalyst for the compositional process. Sessions' impulse, although defined differently, function in a similar manner for him as

God did for Brahms and Beethoven, providing him with the means necessary for creation.

If indeed the inspiration for creation comes from a source beyond conscious human control as these composers have suggested, why do creators choose to act upon the inspiration? Sessions apparently felt the composer was obliged to strive to create after receiving an impulse, but what was the motivation for the other composers? What is it which compels creators to expend so much time and energy on their craft -- to express themselves in ways deemed "creative"? Is it possible for creators, unlike Sessions, to feel an impulse or inspiration yet refuse to act upon it?

Copland claimed creation was absolutely vital for self-knowledge and so the composer must act on creative impulse if only to know him/herself better. "I must create in order to know my self, and since self-knowledge is a never-ending search, each new work is only a part answer to the question "Who am I?" and brings with it the need to go on to other and different part answers" (Copland 51). The mystery of self-identity is not easily solved. For Copland, the only possible way to come close to a solution was to continue creating in hopes of further enlightenment through the production of a new creation. The answering of the question "Who am I?" is essential for most human beings whether s/he pursues it consciously or unconsciously. Despite numerous debates, essays, books and philosophical and psychological studies, no answer has appeared which fits every individual. Copland's solution was to continue piecing together his part answers in order to at least solve the questions for himself.

He also believed creation was essential for the self-identity of the world in general for “the world at large knows itself through its artists, discovers the very nature of its Being through the creations of its artists” (Copland 51). The world knows itself through its artists because the lives of its artists are a vital part of the world. The artists’ lives reflect the world as they experience and perceive it. In enlightening the artist, the creations also enlighten the world intertwined as they are with the two.

Copland claimed the act of creation erupts out of the need to know the self, but Brahms took the claim one step further. Creation occurs out of a need to provide for others. Brahms said, “I want -- namely, to be inspired so that I can compose something that will uplift and benefit humanity -- something of permanent artistic value” (Abell 5). Brahms interests lay not only in himself, but in the effect of his work on other individuals. He was not being entirely egotistical in wanting to create something permanent and valuable. His interests lay in creating for the good of all people. He recognized that creation is both a selfish and a selfless endeavor.

Strauss felt he created because of a sense of a responsibility. God had graced him with a gift of inspiration and he was obligated to use it well. “I realized the ability to have such ideas lodge in my consciousness is a Divine gift. It is a mandate from God entrusted to my keeping, and I feel that my highest duty is to make the most of this gift” (Abell 100). His relationship with God compelled him to create and take responsibility for the gift. With the gift he could create great music and through that reflect his God to the world.

Most of the composers cited here suggested that an interaction with a higher power or a Divine influence affected their compositional processes. They spoke only minimally about composition as a technique, but instead as a creative process governed by something other than the human conscious. In contrast, composers of the Baroque and Classical periods wrote very little on their compositional processes and what was written concerned technique, theory and craftsmanship, not inspiration from above or imagination. This was, however, probably not unusual for the time. They did not generally focus on the philosophy of music, at least in their writings, but were concerned with their craftsmanship and the technique of using musical materials most effectively. The composers of the Romantic and post-Romantic periods, in contrast, began to spend a great deal of time contemplating their creation. This may have been a reflection of the trends in other fields of study including art, philosophy and literature, or it may have resulted precisely because of the apparent absence of interest by their predecessors. Composers following the Baroque and Classical periods had little history of the compositional process to study and this may have led to their greater tendency to reflect on the nature of their craft. For them, this resulted in an association of creativity with inspiration and a higher power.

Brahms' God, Copland's imagination and Sessions' impulse were their answers to the mystery of inspiration and creations. They expressed their experiences in quite different ways, but the common factor is an interaction with a force beyond the conscious control which results in what is called "creativity." The creators were then

able to use this creativity in their crafts to produce monumental musical creations.

II. The Compositional Process

After the composer has interacted with his/her higher power, imagination, etc., s/he must then use this inspiration in his/her work. The critical point in the creative process comes as the composer attempts to turn his/her inspiration into tangible musical form through the compositional process. Inspiration is unintelligible and useless to other individuals until the creator has been able to convert it into familiar form. This requires the composer first and foremost to be intimately familiar with musical theory and form. Inspiration cannot be used effectively through a composer not comfortable with his/her craftsmanship. Brewster Ghiselin suggests, "Even the most energetic and original mind, in order to reorganize or extend human insight in any valuable way, must have attained more than ordinary mastery of the field in which it is to act, a strong sense of what needs to be done, and skill in the appropriate means of expression" (Ghiselin 29). Attempting to communicate inspiration without adequate craftsmanship would be like the writer attempting to communicate without knowing the language of the natives -- his/her writing is meaningless to all but him/herself. Craftsmanship is absolutely essential for the compositional process.

In order to use their inspiration and craftsmanship most effectively when creating, composers agreed on several necessary factors. First, the composer needed to be alone to create. The solitude was an essential opportunity for the mind to relax. The composer could escape from daily concerns and open his/her mind for

inspiration. Mozart commented, "When I am, as it were, completely myself, entirely alone...it is on such occasions that my ideas flow best and most abundantly. Whence or how they come, I know not, nor can I force them" (Ghiselin 45). Solitude was not only essential for receiving inspiration, but was also necessary to avoid losing inspiration. For some composers, any distraction effectively interrupted the creative process and resulted in a loss of musical ideas. The presence of outside influences inhibited the creative flow and it could not usually be regained voluntarily.

This is the second factor composers agreed upon; creation is involuntary. When the creative flow is interrupted it cannot be voluntarily regained. Inspiration cannot be forced, but it does come more easily under certain circumstances. When the composer is alone and/or has an intense desire to create, inspiration is more likely to surface. Brahms suggested that the key to creation lies in trusting in inspiration to materialize. "We have a far greater knowledge of scientific laws than prevailed one hundred and fifty years ago, and yet Mozart had a much greater capacity for drawing inspiration from above that any composer has in our time" (Abell 108). Mozart was not aware of much of the scientific knowledge available to Brahms, but was still able to create great works. Brahms was possibly suggesting that using science to create implies conscious planning and voluntary forethought, while his creative experience required faith in the involuntary inspiration. He felt that the involuntary nature of creation does not allow science to replace it.

Sessions reinforced this thinking by describing the composer not as a thinker,

but as a maker, and as a man of faith rather than conviction. The composer, while obviously thinking when composing, is foremost aware of the inspiration leading to the composition. "The composer's point of departure...is based not on careful analysis, weighing, and comparison of facts, but at best on insight, born of intense and active experience, into the nature of the materials and the creative process of his art" (Sessions 4). The work of the genius composer takes him/her far beyond the simple, scientific logistics of music theory to the inexplicable, involuntary understanding of the nature of the music.

Although they agreed that craftsmanship, solitude and recognition of creation as involuntary were vital to composition, after these, each composer had his own method of proceeding through the compositional process. Each had his own way of contacting inspiration and using it in his work. Brahms began by entering a state of semi-trance (also noted by Richard Wagner) in which his mind could appropriate Divinity and open to the workings of inspiration. With a compositional purpose already in mind, he appealed to God for guidance. He believed that by contacting his subconscious, he enabled the creative Spirit to work through him, providing the inspiration for his creative endeavor. Brahms felt that if the composer slipped into the unconscious, s/he would lose his/her ability to shape the inspiration into musical form. In his experience, the inspiration then received was quite fleeting and it was therefore very important to immediately write down his ideas. According to Brahms, humans have not learned to synchronize the conscious and subconscious minds and

so only by writing down the ideas is it possible to prevent their loss. What is received in the subconscious is not directly transferable to the conscious and so the form the inspiration takes in the final musical work is only an echo of the creative Spirit. This is not dissimilar to Socrates' theory that the entire world is only a poor reflection of a more Divine realm, and so the lesser quality of written composition from the initial inspiration is quite natural and not unlike the reality of the rest of the world. Brahms' compositional process required the interaction of God with Brahms' subconscious. This interaction permitted Brahms to create to meet his compositional purpose.

Like Brahms, Strauss felt the tenuousness of inspiration and its fleeting quality. By preserving his ideas in writing, Strauss could later return to them, even after an interruption, and recreate his inspired state-of-mind. In this way, he was able to further develop the ideas into his musical creations. He also concurred with Brahms that before contacting the Divine, the composer must have an intense desire to create and a specific compositional purpose.

Max Bruch added patience and concentration to his list of essential when composing. The transfer of inspiration to composition required not only solitude, but a willingness to wait and a single focus and devotion to the compositional purpose. He elaborated upon this theme and said:

The composer must sit in the silence and wait for the direction from a force that is superior to the intellect. If he knows how to contact that power, he becomes the projector of the infinite invisibility into visibility, or rather into audibility, in the composer's case. In my opinion, the great composer is not so much the

reflection of God, as has been claimed, but rather the expression of God, on this earth place (Abell, 146).

Bruch believed, as did some other composers, that the composer, if patient and open to inspiration, functions as a tool or intermediary for a higher being, converting inspiration into tangible musical form through the compositional process. Both Bruch and Brahms specifically noted the need to contact God when to receive inspiration when creating, but both felt that few of their contemporaries had the ability to make this contact. Bruch presumed that fewer than five percent of his contemporaries could do so, and Brahms projected an even more dismal figure. He estimated that less than two percent of composers were able to contact God and this, in his opinion, accounted for the lack of many new quality compositions (Abell 62, 147).

An unusual perspective on the compositional process was presented by Edvard Grieg. When initially questioned by Arthur Abell about his source of inspiration and the subsequent act of composition, he responded, "The mountains and fjords and the fragrant pine forests of my native country have always been a source of inspiration to me" (Abell 153). His purpose in composing was to take that inspiration and make the spirit of the Norwegian people audible to the world. He made no mention of contact with God or any other higher power, nor of possessing a vivid imagination. Grieg believed at that point that his compositional process was a response to his beloved Norway and composing was a simply natural reaction on his part. Yet after hearing Brahms' description of his own creative process, Grieg reconsidered. He determined the compositional process was something which must develop with

experience and was not always a conscious endeavor. "I composed as the spirit moved me, without comprehending clearly that I was working with great cosmic laws. Whereas Brahms realized, just as Beethoven did, that he was being aided by Omnipotence. It is only a supreme creative genius who can rise to such heights" (Abell 162). Grieg represented a creator just beginning to understand the workings of his compositional process. He was not fully aware how to best use his inspiration through composition. Grieg's progress toward self understanding could easily reflect that of nearly any young, genius composer who is only beginning to realize his/her full potential. S/he is aware of inspiration coming from beyond the self, but has not pinpointed from where or learned how best to use it when composing.

Poet Amy Lowell agreed that creative works resulted from inspiration and craftsmanship. They were not a product of daydreams, but emerged from an altered state-of-mind. In Lowell's experience with the creative process, part of the procedure of converting inspiration to creation occurred in the subconscious without any discerning effort on her part. "I meet them [poems] where they touch consciousness and that is already a considerable distance along the road of evolution" (Ghiselin 109). The subconscious functioned as a melting pot for creative ideas which emerged as they were ready. Lowell was then able to further change and shape them by conscious effort in the creative process.

Aaron Copland was quite aware of the functioning of creativity in his own experience with the compositional process. He articulated quite clearly three

processes which could occur in the creative mind as musical ideas were conceived and developed.

In the first case, Copland claimed the creative mind divided into halves. One half functioned as the inspiration, emoting or dictating musical ideas. The other half was responsible for listening and notating the ideas. When subjected to close scrutiny, the emoting half would quickly fade, and so the composer was forced to allow it to dictate freely and whimsically to the listening half which would capture the ideas so the composer could later transcribe them on paper.

In the second case, a creative impulse, without conscious desire or will on the part of the composer, completely overtook the rational mind and obliterated familiar consciousness. Copland described the process as a "spontaneous expression of emotional release" (Copland 54). This impulse provided the creativity so essential to musical composition and delivered the music, already formed, to the composer's conscious. In Copland's experience, these first two cases were very brief encounters which were exhausting to the composer. The consequences were fairly short musical works because the sheer intensity of the experience and its alliance with the unconscious mind did not permit the composer to consciously shape an extended composition.

In the third case, inspiration came to the composer in a less intense manner, which allow the critical mind to act with the creative intuition. The result was a longer period of time in which inspiration was available. As a consequence of the conditions

of this case, the composer could use his/her conscious to further develop the musical ideas. S/he was able to create extended works because s/he could consider the entire work and shape each part appropriately rather than simply succumb to the dictates of the creative mind. The creative and critical minds working together enabled the composer to better evaluate both the in and outside of the work and assess its value fairly. As Brahms noted many years previously, both creativity and craftsmanship were absolutely essential of using the compositional process most effectively.

The compositional process is the link between creativity and inspiration and the written musical score. It is inherently dependent on both inspiration and quality craftsmanship to be successful. Although the process works differently for each composer, there are some common themes including the need for solitude, an intense desire to create and an understanding of the involuntary nature of creation. The subconscious often functions as a point of germination for the seeds of creative activity. Its tenuous relationship with the conscious mind gives the creative germ an opportunity to further develop under the influence of the master craftsman who molds and shapes it into a musical creation.

III. The Interpretive Process

The performer or interpreter is not often associated with inspiration and the creative process. After all, the composer is the individual responsible for creating the musical work. S/he is the one who desires to create, is inspired, and finally,

transcribes his/her creation in standard musical notation. Creativity seems to truly belong in the domain of the composer. The interpreter is present only to express the composer's musical message. Yet, perhaps the interpreter's role cannot be so easily defined. Sessions asks, "What, then, is the task of the performer? Is it simply fidelity to the composer's text, or is the performer himself a creative artist for whom the music performed is simply a vehicle for the expression of his personality?" (Sessions 77). The interpreter's role has become increasingly flexible as the roles of composer and performer have grown apart. Historically, the composer and performer were often the same person. Because of this, distinguishing between the roles of creativity and inspiration in composition and the roles in interpretation was difficult if not completely impossible. The interpreter would have already been intimately familiar with the background and development of the music as s/he was also the composer. The composer, when writing, would have had an interpretation already in mind. As a result, creativity in composition and performance were closely linked. In contemporary performance, however, the composer and the performer are rarely the same individual. Thus, the role of the interpreter must be redefined.

The current role of the performer is that of creator, interpreter and a translator between the composer and the audience. Alfred Brendel explains that the interpreter has a "threefold function of curator, executor and obstetrician" (Brendel 39). Rather than functioning as only a projector of musical sound, the performer is an integral part of fine music making. The variety of musical interpretation available in

a given work and incredible variety of musical forms require an interpreter with skill and insight for communicating the message of the music. "It is this essential and inherent quality of music -- its fluidity, the fact that it is an art, even the art par excellence, of time -- that has inevitably produced the performer" (Sessions 69). The continuing renewal of music requires corresponding renewal in interpretation and performance, and this is the responsibility of the performer. Sessions suggests that one of the primary problems with listening to music recordings as opposed to live performances is the very predictability of the recording. The music ceases to be fresh when the recording is played repeatedly and it loses its listener appeal. "When the music ceases to be fresh for us...it ceases to be alive, and we can say in the most real sense that it ceases to be music" (Sessions 71). Infinite variety is a defining quality of music and part of the interpreter's job is to maintain that variety.

Copland believed that inspiration was crucial for the interpreter although inspiration serves a slightly different purpose for the interpreter than for the composer; the composer creates music out of nothing while the interpreter creates something out of the music. But the interpreter, like the composer, understands the uncertainty of the involuntary act of creation and the necessity of inspiration for creation. S/he is fully aware of the inability to consciously draw on inspiration or creativity when interpreting. This inability to consciously call on inspiration may be reflected in the numerous variations between repeat performance of the same work. (These differences could, however, be attributed to the variability of inspiration as

Strauss suggested.) The interpreter's creation is undeniably intertwined with the composer's, but under the interpreter's guidance, the creation develops in new musical directions in each performance. In at least some way, the interpreter is responsible for the completion of the composer's creation. "The music is not totally present, the idea of the composer is not fully expressed, in any single performance, actual or even conceivable, but rather in the sum of all possible performances" (Session 85). The interpreter's many performances are one more step on the work's journey to completion which is eventually completed as it reaches the listener.

The interpreter's inspiration, like his creation, does not come out of nothing. Much of the interpreter's inspiration results from his/her research on the history of the music or from communication with the composer. For a number of reasons, it is beneficial for the performer to interact with the composer as s/he prepares an interpretation. First, the composer can best explain his/her own music -- colors, musical ideas, harmonies and shaping. The manuscript cannot and does not convey all of the composer's intentions and is really only an approximation of the composer's musical thoughts. Second, the composer can learn much about his/her own work from the interpreter. The performer's interpretation may give the composer additional insight into his/her creation. The music the composer heard in his/her head as s/he created, may or may not be what is sounded when the work is performed and this interaction with the interpreter is a vital step in refining the music. Unfortunately, this personal interaction is not usually possible. Obviously many

composers are no longer living so the performer must find some other means of effectively creating an inspired interpretation.

Inspiration sometimes results from study of the history of the music. By familiarizing him/herself with the compositional style of the composer, the characteristics of music of the given time period, and the performance practices of the time, the performer can better understand how to interpret the music for an audience.

These qualifications alone do not always effect a convincing performance of the music. Copland claims there are other factors contributing to inspired interpretations besides familiarity with the composer and the history of the music. The performer must utilize his/her creativity to effectively communicate the composer's musical message to an audience without sacrificing the music's purpose or the integrity of the composer. "The creator is in the unique position of a man who has lost his power of speech and consigns his thoughts by letter to an audience that cannot read words" (Copland 59). The task of translating the composer's letters falls to the interpreter. As s/he translates, s/he must be careful to retain the spirit of the music. The concern is less with tonal perfection or technique than the nature of the interpretation. The performer is to provide each interpretation with unique character and expression within the composer's musical context.

Each performance becomes an act not only of interpretation, but also of creation. Edward Cone proposes:

If, as I believe, Wilson Coker is correct in suggesting that 'one can regard the musical work as an organism, a sort of spokesperson who addresses listeners,' then the performer, far from being an imperfect intermediary between composer and listener, an inaccurate translator of musical thought, is a living personification of the spokesperson -- of the mind that experiences music; or more clumsily but more precisely, of the mind whose expression the music is (Cone 5).

In this case, the interpreter not only translates, but actually personifies the music s/he performs. As an actor becomes his/her character, so the performer becomes the music and the voice of the composer.

Copland briefly outlined several styles of interpretation related to the performer's individual personality and creative tendencies: the true romantic interpretation, giving the impression of risk taking in performance, a personalized reading of the work, a classic approach concerned with forward motion, a performance of ease and relaxation, and the performance distinguished by national characteristics (Copland 61-66). Each of these styles are perfectly legitimate forms of interpretation depending on the performer and his/her musical intent. The styles vary according to the interpreter's individual taste and his/her understanding of the work. The interpreter's inspiration may cause him/her to favor one style for one performance and another for a second performance, or the inspiration may simply dictate the style for the performance. Each may communicate the given piece quite effectively from the composer through the interpreter to the audience.

The audience is of prime consideration when the performer is planning an

interpretation. S/he must consider carefully the listener's response to the interpretation and how to best communicate the musical ideas. The listener is essentially the final step in the development of the music. The composer generates and shapes the music out of his/her inspiration, the interpreter expresses and renews the music, and the listener responds to the music. S/he may respond in various ways -- critically, emotionally, etc. -- but it is this response which completes the development of the music. An interpreter performs before many different audiences and s/he must shape his/her performance appropriately, encouraging the audience to become involved in the music and responsive to its ideas. Listeners vary by age, sex, musical background, musical interest, etc. These variations may affect not only what works the interpreter chooses to perform, but also how s/he interprets them. One of the interpreter's purposes is to communicate the musical message and this can only be done effectively by understanding the audience and speaking their language.

As outlined, the role of the interpreter varies considerably. S/he must simultaneously be creator, interpreter and translator. Based on inspiration from a knowledge of the background of a musical work, an occasional acquaintance with a composer, and a desire to communicate a message, the performer must shape and define his/her interpretation. S/he is an active participant in the renewal process of music -- sensitive to both the desires of the composer and his/her own creative impulses and inspiration -- and in the process communicates a musical message unique in every performance. The interpreter is an central figure in the complete expression

of the music through the sum of many performances. S/he is irrevocably intertwined with the composer and the listener in the process of music making.

Related to both the compositional process and the interpretive process is the subject of women in music. Men far outnumber women as composers, but some of the finest interpreters have been women. Why are there so few famous women who are composers, but many well-known women who are interpreters? There are variety of possible answers to this question, some of which include biological differences between men and women, social structures and gender role conditioning. So far, none of them are complete answers, but each suggest some insight into the differences.

Through one of his Norton lectures on creative and interpretive minds, Copland addressed this issue primarily from a biological perspective. "It appears to indicate the conception and shaping of abstract ideas in extended forms marks a clear boundary between the creative mind and the interpretive mind" (Copland 53). According to this theory, the act of creation and the act of interpretation require different types of thinking and given that there are few women composers, the creative thinking is not readily apparent in the female gender. Men have traditionally been considered to be analytical thinkers and women to be emotive thinkers. Is it the analytical perspective which creates, but the emotive side which so beautifully interprets? Yet, if that is the case, how does one explain the great male interpreters or justify the few famous female composers? Perhaps the answer is not entirely biological. Social structures and gender role conditioning have almost certainly

affected women as composers. There is the problem of the predominantly patriarchal society throughout the history of western music which severely limited the advancement of women. Would more women have become great composers had they been given the same opportunities for study of music as men were given? Under pressure to conform to social and gender role expectations, women were usually not allowed to advance significantly in the study of music theory and craftsmanship. Women were allowed to perform in public as nineteenth century wore on and this may account for the well-known women interpreters. But the lack of study in music theory limited these women from developing to their greatest potential as composers. Perhaps if women and men had been consistently given the same opportunities to study composition and interpretation, the discrepancies in numbers would be lessened.

Virginia Woolf considers another point in her book A Room of One's Own. Near the end, Woolf comments that women have never, at least in traditional western societies, had a place of their own. Men have their studies and libraries, but women share their home with their families and do not experience the freedom of solitude or the gift of time. She says, "Intellectual freedom depends upon material things. Poetry depends upon intellectual freedom. And women have always been poor...Women have less intellectual freedom than the sons of Athenian slaves. Woman, then, have not had a dog's chance of writing poetry. That is why I have laid so much stress on...a room of one's own" (Woolf 108). Women have not had an opportunity to write either poetry or music. As many composers have claimed, solitude is necessary for

creation, patience and time are necessary for creation -- and those necessities have not been available to women. If these vital necessities have not been present, is it no wonder that there have been so few female composers?

The solution to these questions has not been neatly bound in a single answer. A variety of factors have influenced the development or lack thereof of female composers. The most likely answer seems to be a combination of biological, social and gender role influences which have prevented women from composing. Some of the vital circumstances necessary for creation were not always available and so women instead became interpreters and performers of the highest degree. Perhaps this trend will be altered with changing social and gender expectations and a better understanding of the workings of the compositional process.

Summary:

Creativity or inspiration are fundamental elements for the mind of the creator. They are the basis for all the works s/he attempts. Each individual uses or appropriates these elements in ways appropriate to his/her individual creative process. Some begin the process by contacting Divinity and others use their vivid imaginations; others draw on the history of music or contact with the composer, but all have a desire or compelling urge to create. Some individuals work as composers, others as interpreters, yet all are creators first and foremost who struggle to capture their fleeting inspirations in manuscript and performance. Puccini claims, "The great secret of all creative geniuses is that they possess that power to appropriate

the beauty, the wealth, the grandeur, and the sublimity contained within the their own soul, which are parts of Omnipotence, and to communicate those riches to others. The conscious, purposeful appropriation of one's own soul forces is the supreme secret" (Abell 116). Although some composers do not ally themselves with Omnipotence, they would perhaps agree that their creations are somehow inspired beyond the conscious mind and their responsibility is to use that inspiration to their greatest ability. For some, creation provides self-understanding and for others, its purpose is to enlighten the world. The composers and interpreters combine their creative forces to communicate musical ideas and meanings to the listener. Together they clarify the many dimension of their musical creations. The listener's response helps complete the development of the musical creation. The creation process itself remain highly individual though some characteristics of it appear to be common to more than a few creators. Desire to create, solitude, patience and craftsmanship seem to be essential elements in the creative process and the absence of any of these may have contributed to the lack to numerous well-known female composers.

Through continued study of the creative process, each musician may find clues to enhance his/her creative endeavors and obtain a clearer understanding of the musical works s/he composes or interprets. Writer Henry Miller comments, "Understanding is not a piercing of the mystery, but an acceptance of it, a living blissfully with it, in it, through and by it" (Ghiselin 181). The creative process can be enjoyed both for its mysteriousness and its infinite variety while functioning as an integral, necessary part

of the lives of many musicians.

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