

THE ‘MATURE STYLE’

SUMMARY

One of my main musical languages. Before the New Style was developed (esp. its reification and descriptive components), my focus was on the “mature style”, synonymous with ‘Joycean’ music. It was born from number of impulses: “open-endedness” to address the “Principles” document’s goal of “investigatory” music, a desire to extend the complexity of musical language toward Joyce’s literary approach, to “reconcile the irreconcilable” (a world where all my languages can co-exist), to facilitate concepts like counterintuition, and simply to “do justice” to Ideas Original and all the possibilities it has exposed (creating a “meta”-historical approach to music) that a ‘single, linear work’ hardly could. “Mature” was taken from Edward Said’s On Late Style, where the ‘mature’ composer gains a greater tolerance for discontinuity and becomes more individualistic and radical. It is mature in its approach to life - not beginning with “answers” but finding them through honest investigation, and also integrating ambiguity, disparity and discontinuity into one’s worldview.

The mature style is rendered (vs. described) - less profound than NS but the highest of the rendered styles I’ve developed. It relies heavily on semantics and autonomous symbolic objects in juxtaposition, each with its own language (see: “semantic content”) - engendering reference and collage, ‘post-consistency’ - evolutions from one style to another, disparate ideas interacting, “turning points”, supersessions, wit and counterintuition, developing variation at multiple levels. Through the “investigatory” approach, the form emerges at the end of the process, versus predeterminism. The mature style is higher solution: as in real life, there is plurality and diversity of elements, yet they cannot help but be the whole, and many paradoxes can be resolve at conceptual level rather than musical one.

In NS, is a leading strategy to symbolize humanity and the ‘world as idea web’.

Tone-editing can “smooth” disparity.

“Joycean” music:

A conversion of the aesthetic of James Joyce into music. Since I delved into his work, his two novels, particularly Ulysses, have become benchmarks for music - and a high standard, because music is an ambiguous often nebulous medium whereas Joyce is one of the most semantically-based, specific writers in history - also anthologically diverse stylistically, highly inclusive, referential. I have written that his writing style implies “knowledge of everything as default”, the universal genius. In many ways this is true, in other ways I have generalized his features and exalted him to archetype for my own purposes.

The “mature style” is one answer to Joyce, collage is another: both can only be achieved after the musical material used is “hallowed” enough with its own “body of knowledge” to be recognizable and packed with semantic value. Joycean tangents can be achieved by form layers, pan-field, alternate versions, “Joycean embeds” (see above), Joyce’s portmanteau can be approached with motif + permutations/development/combinatorics, semantics can be built by giving more parameters of music definite symbolic meaning (note, key, chord, etc.), his experiments with historical pastiche can be directly converted using historic genre styles and quotes, and my own languages like intellectual counterpoint can provide much of the rest, or collage with its potential to superimpose.

The leitmotivic richness of Salome has become one hypothetical realization of Joyce: The way objects are juxtaposed, layered, combined, transformed = semantic meaning (dev var implication), and is similar to serialism in its demand on the listener to extract information from the music.

Opus 1 is the target vehicle for Joycean music, but it is also a reification strategy with high potential, so will be used in many symbolic objects. “Reification equivalencies/analogues” has outlined hundreds of symbolic parallels between music and real-world semantic meaning.

THE MATURE STYLE

Genesis: “The Late Style” (Edward Said)

The “mature style” corresponds to the “late style” in its refusal to reconcile contradictions.

In one’s own language

Radical, uncompromising

Rejection of: illusion, ornament, reconciliation, communication, humanism

Composer as Editor: the quality of the artist is reflected in what they allow to enter into a final work (their standards in editing)

“in every composer, deep structure is censored, evaluated critically – rejections/inclusions and revisions”

“Alienated masterpiece”

Irony

Sudden discontinuities

Resistance of sensuality

The “danger of the new”

Doesn’t oversimplify, presents the ambiguities and difficulties as they are – acknowledgement of them is the first step

Nobility/good works/heroism vs. introspection/individual flaw/escapism = tension in late-style works

Works of self referential, self conscious nature

“Milder, or they tear everything apart and give you only the essence” – Barenboim

Distilled

“Mature” language

“So I extended the complexity of the language - melody harmonized by progressions = irreducible complexity, organic cpt, much more conducive to metaphorically representing nature. Developing variation @ multiple levels, along with investigatory process, makes the form emerge @ the end of the process, so it is ‘post-form’, denying the possibility of form “imposing” unnatural order. A true ‘organic’ conception. I see the composition as where vestiges of many of my ideas can interact, layered, hence ‘post-style’. Also possibly ‘post-coherence’, denying a simple, clear understanding, even esotericism. Importantly, metaphoric representation will be achieved over time, by long lines, timing, etc. - a lot different than a single gesture, almost all of which have become clichéd. There aren’t many new textures, but many ways of ordering event, which as LB exposed, expands possibilities exponentially (which almost none of my beats have). I listened to Hammerklavier’s fugue& glimpsed the ‘new way’, that seemed more tangible than the last time I heard it. The new “style” I have in mind is risky, but claims to be ‘more mature’ as it rejects preconceived style in favor of investigation and a ground-up/“from scratch” conception of each new work. ‘Post-coherence’ really means ‘post-consistency’ as one style could organically evolve into another, or one idea interacting w/ many disparate ones - like the ‘late style’, it’s impatient w/ simple-minded expectations.”

Open-ended, killing predeterminism - all investigatory, combinatory, developmental, etc.

Symbolic of the disparate nature of the idea web and the interaction of our world

Not committing to one conclusion: like variation form or cubism, showing many options - open-ended works, etc.

Not finishing any works that remain unsolved (not imposing a solution on them)

Meta-approach

Semantic combinatorics of disparate objects (tone-edit smoothes this)

Collage and juxtaposition of previously-created objects (MIDI and audio)

Dictated by concept

The mature style implies that the logic is ideological, not necessarily in the sound (Babbitt, etc.)

Concept transfigures eclecticism (have a long meditation on the concept)

Tone-editing will be essential

Must still lean toward the nature style (the “vast” style) - and must not seem modular

The greatest geniuses are impossible to define/“pin down”

United by sensibility and idea - aggressive, dark, ext’d tonality etc.

The challenge to satisfy multiple impulses? or not?

Collage as primary axiom

Abstractness

Conceptual unity (completeness) and possible developing variation and variation

There are no existing analogues, and looking for them is futile

Using analogues leads to tangents - like benchmarking Beethoven and then rejecting his tonality

Unified by aspects of I.O. theory (presence of superseding/form, transfiguration, counterintuition, incoherence, etc.)

character (“appearances”) + axiom

Turning points, evolutions, de-evolutions, breaks in logic

Includes other languages:

All rendered language, and NS through audio description

Poetics + nature style, H700

“Glimpses/flashes” of full-commitment works, subsumed into collage framework

Concept fuses the transition and nature languages, and dictates *what* to use *when*

the mature style

the nature style is more extreme when juxtaposed against (certainly more gratifying)

examples of poetics/nature fusions:

Hammerklavier

WTC (preludes vs. fugues)

tonal material with difficult axioms (Alkan, Hamelin, Beethoven)

1983

Love Supreme

Black Gold beat

In Our Lifetime (End)

Peace Fugue, Divine Image, Red Hot (LSD)

Redefines “eclecticism” based on legitimate goals.

The “mature style” or “beyond cohesion” implies that each variation can follow completely different laws.

“While serialism and microsonic music come at music from a scientific perspective, the New Style is philosophical and post-assertion/ “mature”. It declares that serialism is but one way to see the world, and could utilize its method in a generalized way... “

Human style = sample collage?

The nature of collage seems to mirror the nature of humanity in general - hectic, “disparate sources”/diversity, different traits, perspectives, verbal exclamations are so important.

One human concept could be a collage of quotes

“Sea of striving” + coherent utterances/“emergences”

Ideas, equations/theories too

“arguments”

To contrast w/ abstractions

Sources: anywhere: existing music, audio of plays, events, lectures, interviews “Quote modules”

Verbal quotes as symbols of all human effort

Not clichés, but what *you* deem important - requires you to study history

Traits of “The Mature Style” in the New Style

Joycean music vs. pastiche:

Joycean embedding cannot simply be a different method to create conventional music. Because of this, traditional musical aspects such as harmony and orchestration trouble me deeply. I have gone to such a length to methodically distance myself, only to have the limits of harmony and orchestration pull me back into superficial similarity with most music. I cannot escape, absent new harmonies and timbres, which could be accessed and imitated by all other musicians/composers anyway. An artist cannot escape color, and a musician cannot escape tonality. One could claim that traditional features of their music are merely necessary evils - and that the true difference lies below the surface, or in the idea/concept etc. - still, as an artist it is painfully difficult to convince yourself that the most obvious aspects of your work should be ignored for more subtle ones. Ideally, I would like to relegate traditional aspects to the background and forcefully assert their unique aspects as primary.

A militantly differentiated style comes with losses that may not be ‘worth’ the benefits of uniqueness. Rothko and Pollock felt freed by their styles, but to another artist, their limitations would be devastating - the denial of representation, denial of brushwork. 12-tone serialism is a freeing idea in that it escapes the “rat race” of melody creation, until one weighs its benefits against the losses of harmony and tonal meaning - enough to terrify most musicians. These are “autistic” styles - self-restricted, puritan, often rejecting the outwardly ‘human’ aspects of their discipline, as autistic people lack social development and communication skills. Yet in art, limitations can translate into strength and potency. Many geniuses in modern music are immediately recognizable. To become comfortable with these severe limitations, the artist must jump in headfirst, and find the richness and possibility for expansion as soon as possible.

The implication of Joyce in music could be to reconcile historical pastiche - the many disparate influences Bernstein points out in Stravinsky’s “Oedipus Rex”. The overarching concept, such as an extramusical plot, can channel the different styles of music toward a common goal, and also be unified by the ensemble playing it. One could go further and use collage or quote, as in Berio’s “Sinfonia”. The concept rescues it to some degree. At a deeper level, Joyce is a model for form and event itself - showing how a composition can be expanded from the inside, as Joyce expands moments without regard for clock-time or typical proportion. Developing variation, articulated using obviously sectional event, is a possible result - Beethoven’s Hammerklavier Sonata: the second movement is a parody of the first, and the introduction to the fugue is a symbol for compositional investigation, as the Oxen of Sun chapter of Ulysses is a metaphor for birth using chronologically evolving styles of the English language.

Having a model to reconcile large events is essential to expand a composition. Yet how can Joycean composition be created with a personal style, rather than yielding to pastiche of others? This is where traditional aspects of music limit the possibilities. Provided that unique styles can be created, then Ulysses can serve as a model for uniting differing *personal* styles. A single plot provides scaffolding for many different stylistic ideas - in Ulysses they are derived from external sources - but the singular plot can just as easily accommodate personal, experimental styles. Here we arrive at Picasso - an artist who used a relatively consistent subject matter to display a dazzling array of new personal styles. I find this the less traveled path in art, versus the modern expectation of an artist with a central style who then colonizes a plethora of subjects - Rothko’s fields expanding to represent the entire spectrum of emotion, for example. Taking “plot” to be a symbol for the category of “singular function/focus”, then Ulysses is a model for the potential of “Concept” to unite multiple new styles.

The artist must then weigh the new styles against the danger of “Trash Music”, garishly incongruous pastiche. This is also the danger of pre-determining the style to be used. The artist should be able to explain the goal of any subject vs. style juxtaposition (symbolism, irony perhaps, or a certain intangible disorientation arising from incongruity). A fugue could be used as a leitmotif for the intellectual, or developing variation as a metaphor for organic growth, an ostinato a symbol of obsession or myopia.