

Unworldly

It's... an indescribable feeling. Something to make us reflect on our past. An agent to make us feel more alone. Something that communicates personally with everyone in its audience. Even the lack of it can be used as an art form.

I used to believe that only the noise that “sounded good” could be considered music — but who am I to judge? Who am I, among billions of humans and among countless other hearing organisms, to tell what is and isn't an art form?

It's difficult to describe music in words. Impossible even, perhaps. One can only really describe its effect on humans, its behavior.

To many, music is “moving” — it brings them to a better place. This can mean a distortion of time, as noted by Berger, physiologically altering the human brain by shutting off the section that perceives time accurately. The “music” of silence can be moving to the point of tears as well, as shown by Abramovich's demonstration by Jones.

Some people would interpret this as the power of reflection. A point of introspection into oneself because music inevitably feels connected to one's personal experiences. Abramovich experiences this herself, even as the performer, because music is not directional.

But sometimes, as with Roxanne in *Bel Canto*, music is simply so moving that it can capture the adoration and awe of everyone in the audience. It gave Roxanne multiple lovers, priests and generals alike peace and calm, and even a little soldier boy embarrassing sexual thoughts. But this was in the middle of an emergency, and this is when its power shines the best.

Because music is a distraction.

It helps draw oneself away from the world, from the concrete world to a mode of personal introspection as well as immersion into the elements of the music. Thompson explores the idea of headphones as a medium of modern music allowing for the implicit indication of privacy — but headphones are not necessary for this. Listening to music will already give a sense of a removal from the present, a displacement of both time and space, which will leave everyone in a reflective state.

Even Cesar's singing, though unskilled compared to Roxanne's, captured the audience, was able to freeze an entire room of dozens of people and allow the audience to appreciate the longing in his voice. The silence of Abramovich pressured people to think outside of the moment, to transcend past a state of simply sitting in a chair across from a demonstrator. Berger explains this “parallel temporal world” that music creates through the biological changes in our brains.

I've experienced this as well. Joe Hisaishi's music in the Studio Ghibli movie soundtracks and Yiruma's piano music have been especially moving. It's not exactly a sense of nostalgia that I sense — I am not quite old enough and have not gone through enough hardship to really appreciate nostalgia — but it always throws me into a trance, into that “temporal world” in which I lose control of my senses, just reveling in the pure musicality of the music.

The tasks we do in this modern, busy lives becomes a drag, a bore. Music is a sort of release, a healthy subjective escape from all of the outside pressures to give the listener some peace.

Works Cited

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