

Garrett List

What is wrong with making accessible music?

I'm trying to find out why it has become forbidden for a composer to write serious but accessible music. This seems to be the case, for audiences have all but rejected most of the "concert music" written in this century, but is it true? And if it is, why have composers spent all this time and energy making something for people that don't want what they have made for them?

There are exceptions to this rule it is true. Some serious composed music has made into the so-called "classical repertoire". But this music is considered to be merely "accessible" (Gershwin, Kabelevski, even Shostakovitch) and is not generally thought of as really "art music" or "high art" or artistic or worthwhile to spend the time or money on its creation or re-creation. Its accessibility has put out of the reach of many of today's musicians and therefore kept many of the "normal" concert goers from hearing it.

Does accessible mean stupid? Does serious mean inaccessible? What does accessible mean?

Film music is stupid? Is it accessible? Jazz is stupid? Is jazz accessible? Is Beethoven accessible? Sometimes what is accessible is stupid and sometimes it is not. What is the difference? Sometimes what is not accessible is stupid and sometimes it is not. What is the difference?

Music for dancing is stupid? Duke Ellington is stupid? Techno is stupid? Disco is stupid? And Barry White is stupid? His music is certainly accessible, but is it stupid?

Does accessible mean that it was done only for the money, like the theme for Europe of Beethoven? Like Richard Clayderman, is his music accessible? It certainly seems stupid at times (R. C.'s music)

What does accessible mean? That it works well in a restaurant or a café, that it sold a lot of CD's? That old ladies like it? That teeny-boppers like it?

What happened to the relation between a composer of serious music and his public? Aaron Copeland wrote some very beautiful music that the public liked and for this

he was shut out of the "cultural establishment" for years. His music is still with us because the audience's liked it. If it had been left up to the Intellectuals to decide, his music would have been put on the shelf with a lot of others. Is Aaron Copeland's music accessible?

And who forbade the composition of serious, accessible music? Why would a composer want to write music to which the public does not like to listen?

In fact, are these questions that only concern me, Garrett List, personally? Or are these questions that concern other composers as well? Does the question of "serious music" only concern the intellectuals? Who is an intellectual? What kind of people make up the public for serious composed music? Are they intellectuals? Is an intellectual someone who is educated to that to which he is listening? Must the people who listen to serious composed music be educated to that to which they listen? If so who is going to teach them? Is the artistic experience only for the initiated? Or can the artistic experience be shared by initiated and non-initiated? What are the choices left to the composer of serious composed music? The aesthetic choices?

A composer of serious composed music that is accessible is one that is committed to something in life and tries to deepen his commitment.