

Music Is Not Notes, It's the (In)tension

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The following was excerpted from a discussion between Mr. LaRouche and his associates on July 7, 2015.

Glass-Steagall is now on the agenda in the Senate. Now, when you look at the conditions of life in the United States and abroad, especially in Europe, but also elsewhere, Glass-Steagall is an igniting process. That is, it is not something you can close off on. Once people are told that Glass-Steagall is available, you're going to have a shock effect. It also will have an effect on music; it's going to have a shock effect on music. Once that thing is presented in the United States as Glass-Steagall, you're going to have a panic on Wall Street, which is a delightful thing to watch. That is crucial.

What's also crucial is a related thing, which is not often treated as being the same subject, but it is: the question of music. The principle of music is not script; it is not description, it is not popular music. Popular music is crap! Leave it to the pigs, but stand away from them because the rush will be great.

The point is, that mankind, inherently, has powers of existence which are the root of the musical composition of music, and this is historic; it goes back to the ancient Greeks and other things of that sort. Our situation is such that we have to understand this thing which is called music. The point is, where does this lie?

Where does all this thing about money and so forth



A musical competition depicted on a vase from Classical Greece.

and all these things—where does it lie in terms of human experience? It lies in something which is not a simple musical score. The greatest composers of music from before Bach, but especially since Bach up to Furtwängler—and Furtwängler was a key achiever after the entry into the Twentieth Century. The Twentieth Century was generally, in education generally, in so-called science generally, it was all a fake; absolutely a fake.

So what's the problem? What is music; and what is the meaning of music for mankind?

A State of the Human Mind

The fact is that the human mind is not a matter of notes. Though notes come into play, they are the shadows of reality, not the source of reality. The problem today is that we have so much unpopular music that people have lost their connection to music—in particular, for example, to Bach and the excitement caused by

Mozart, the higher excitement by Beethoven, Schumann as an inspirational element in the process of the evolution of Classical musical composition. And Brahms—Brahms’s latest works were also great works, and they were each unique in their originality, and they were valid. They weren’t just improvisations; they involved a matter of human principle, of the human mind’s principle.

And Furtwängler, of course, is the exemplar of the post-World War II period. Even though he was born in an earlier period, his entire intention in music was located in Brahms and the other people who preceded him. He was the best expert, and is important in this in particular for us now, because we’re looking for examples of this principle which are more readily comprehended by people who are not the best trained in music. You want people who are not the best trained in music to be able to come up to a level which achieves something which they otherwise would not have accomplished. In other words, they have to struggle to find out what the discovery is, which is there. In the case of Furtwängler, Furtwängler did things which are most commonly referred to in terms of his treatment of the Schubert 9th Symphony.

All good proponents during the Twentieth Century proceeded with a reasonable attempt to continue the Classical musical composition principle. Now, this is not an animate object, it’s not an experience as such; it’s a principle of mankind, it’s a principle of the human mind, because in all cases it reaches beyond what people can arrive at deductively. You have popular music, which is considered popular music; and you have also deductive music, which is destructive music—modern music, practical music. It’s stupid, it’s demoralizing; it’s corrupting, it’s polluting.

Yet the principle which underlies music is a principle of the human mind, which does not have a physical expression in and of itself. What Furtwängler did with the 9th Symphony of Schubert is a living example of what that distinction is. Most people who tried to perform the Schubert 9th Symphony got it wrong, because they were looking at it in simple terms of



Keeping the Classical tradition alive: Conductor Wilhelm Furtwängler (1886-1954).

notes and beats and so forth—the mechanical approach. If you listen very carefully to what Furtwängler did in that symphony, there’s a silence in between the notes, and the silence is what defines the notes. That means that the person has to actually put their mind in a dimension which is not a so-called practical expression, not a simple physical principle. You can take all Classical music in general from particularly Bach on to the most recent time, and the note is never the basis *per se* for competent musical composition. Why?

Music is not music *per se*; music is a state of the human mind which finds its expression in new forms, insight into new forms, higher forms of insight into the nature of the human species, and in the progress of the human species. You cannot mechanically produce decent music; you have to have an inspiration. You have to envelop it internally, and let it envelop you. And when it envelops you, then you begin to understand yourself.

That’s what you mean by the great performers. They were not rehearsing notes; they were creating an order in which the music flows, which is not the sound—it’s the tension. The tension, not the sound. And anyone who performs competently in music, knows that. It’s the tension which makes it. That’s what Furtwängler did with the 9th Symphony of Schubert—the tension. If you listen very carefully to what he does with the open-

ing of that symphony—don't listen for the note! Listen for the irony, the irony which lies within the domain of the set of notes. The notes as such have a special meaning, and the meaning is the difference between man and a monkey.

What Lies Between the Notes

The problem is that today we have lost sight of the meaning of humanity. We want a form of music which does not involve humanity, and that's the problem. When you say the literal note is the basis of music, that's idiocy! Anyone who really knows something about music, knows exactly what the implications are of that principle of composition. It's unique to human beings. It's unique to human beings who have an apprehension of what is the value of musical composition. Every competent musician wants to find that location, where the voice is placed and the tone is placed as such. It produces an effect which bestirs the soul of the individual person.

You have to uplift people, inspire them, which is the function of Classical music. But the sound is not the thing; it's the tension, not the sound. People can try to practice the thing in terms of the sound, and it doesn't work. It's the tension between the space of the sound; between the notes. It's a common expression: "Music lies between the notes." Now, what does it lie there for? It lies in the area of tension between the notes, and the role of the tension is what determines the quality of the music. It's the inspiration of a state of mind which is not based on sound, but is based on the tension which may be associated with sound.

It is that tension which makes the difference between an animal, a papier-mâché project, and a human being. It is the tension that lies between the cracks of the notes. And it is that tension, if you listen very carefully—a musician can do this, who's experienced. Look between the notes in Furtwängler's work, especially the opening of the first part [of Schubert's 9th Symphony], and look at how he paces the stress in the passage of the notes, between the passage of the notes. That's where the location of creative musical insight comes into obvious reality. The achievement of most of the greatest musicians, composers, is to rely on that principle. Mozart did; Bach already did. Beethoven did it. He was a genius at it. Others were there, important famous musical figures who were also poets. And the poem doesn't mean anything unless you understand

where the stress is which lies principally behind and between the notes. That is the difference between music and a recording device; an idiot who can speak all day, but can't think.

An Out-of-Tune Culture

And therefore, we've come to a time where the idea of the identity of the human mind and the creative powers of the human mind are not arithmetic. Arithmetic is for stupid people, or dead people. The point is the inspiration of what man can mean, the progress of man; the indefinite progress of man's development; the ability of mankind to achieve things in space, including the Galaxy. Where's your galaxy score? It's an essential part which runs the universe! When did you last play your Galaxy? Well, we can play the Galaxy! It's by learning how to use the principle. It's not called music, but music is something which is an instrument of life. It's the instrument of life of a human being, whether they're a composer, or simply a child who's fascinated by a tuneful piece of music.

What we're dealing with now in the habits of the United States population in general, is that there is, out there, an existing, knowable principle which is associated most prominently with Classical musical composition. It also comes out in the form of ancient Greek poetry. The essential thing is that music is essentially a form of poetry, with a rather strict sense of when you're on tune, and when you're off tune for that purpose. Today, we have completely off-tune minds of people—that's the general characteristic. People today are not generally really human. They may be human physically, in physical behavior, but they have lost the connection to humanity. Humanity is not a procedure! It's not just a simple actor, it's not a machine. The human mind has no known duplication as a principle.

What we're dealing with is a degenerate culture; where classical poetry—including for example, ancient Greek poetry, which is a form of song; its characteristic is that of song, of music—has been lost. Wherever that has been lost, the tendency is to produce something like Zeus.

It is to call the spirit of the human individual—not the song as a mere fact, but the intention, the spirit of the motive. When people have lost that, you get Twentieth Century music, which is intrinsically gar-

bage. Some people survived, despite being located in the Twentieth Century, but they didn't deserve such treatment.

Therefore, you have a problem now in music, or art, or everything of relevant human behavior: You have no contact with your own humanity, because you make yourself a machine. What we have lost is a connection to the medium of action by human minds, which actually define the human work.

Glass-Steagall is a good example of that. What's Glass-Steagall? It's creativity *per se!* So it's you, the human being inside you, that's in charge, not the potter. And that's the danger of evil. We are induced more and more to surrender to the popularity of idiocy, of submitting to arbitrary values which are not values at all, and we lose the connection to humanity. And humanity is not a sound! Humanity is an experience of a tension, and all great composition and performance is based on that kind of intention, and tension. It's tension, as in intention, of a living human being which is what the principle is.

The question of teaching of people principles of science that mankind in general had never known before, that's music. That's the principle of music.

Being Human

The point is the activity based on a human principle, a purely human principle of discovery, not on a mechanical device, not on punching out notes on a piano, unless you can be clever and outwit the piano, and make it do things by the way you play it, which brings it to life. The music does not come from the piano; the piano comes from the music. And the people who are capable of doing something about that, are the people who have some insight into humanity. People who can't do that are just banging.

That's what the problem is. The issue is that the



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"Music is the instrument of life of a human being," LaRouche said. Here, young children performing a Classical concert in Leesburg, Virginia in August 1985.

creative powers inherent in mankind, as a potential, define the device which is not a sound, but is a stress, it's a tension; a tension which actually defines the activity of the human mind. What we've done in the United States recently, what popular music has done, is to destroy the humanity of the human individual. Most people who accept popular music are idiots, or worse.

All great music is born of human passion. And if you don't express passion, you ain't a musician! The whole thing is passion! It is to move people, to change the way they're thinking at that mood and time, as a constructive act. Constructive acts! Trying to uplift people to what they didn't know, trying to have them discover things which they thought they were incapable of doing. It is these tributes, which help us understand what humanity is.

In the United States now, under Wall Street influence and things like that, we have no human qualities insofar as we're part of that. Therefore Glass-Steagall is the human motivation among human individuals, in their purposeful actions for a useful effect for the sake of humanity. That's human. Everything else is a farce, and that is what is wrong with the United States right now. There is no human love in the process.