

HEART AND SOUL OF MUSIC

Since Carrie's theme is the "Heart and Soul of ESA", I tried to find what the heart and soul of music is.

One thing I found is that "Heart and Soul" is also a popular song, with music by Hoagy Carmichael and lyrics by Frank Loesser, published in 1938. The original 1938 version was performed by Larry Clinton and his Orchestra featuring Bea Wain.

The song's musical format is often simplified as a repeating chord progression often referred to as the "50s progression" and taught to beginning piano students as an easy two hand duet (https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=w9_vXOzFT50). Much like the piece "Chopsticks", the version became widely known, even to those who never studied piano and is still popular today as portrayed in the movie "Big" with Tom Hanks where he plays it on a giant floor keyboard in the toy store (<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=0Yu62StlsMY>).

There isn't really just one thing that's the heart and soul of music. But if there was, what would it be? What makes music, music? How do we know what's musical and what's not? Why is music music to some and noise to others? Everyone thinks they know music when they hear it, but few can say exactly what it is and why.

Imposing a single definition on all the world's music is difficult because people's opinion differ about what music is and what is musical. Rather than trying to define music, we look for a concept of music that works for the culture of study. Here are a few concepts that likely work for any music:

1. Music can best be understood as "humanly organized sound" or "the purposeful organization of sound."
2. Music is a form of communication. Music has much in common with language, and the two are almost inseparable as ingredients in popular song, opera and other musical forms. The relationship between music and language has been an important part of the human musical experience since prehistoric times. But without emotion language and music could not be experienced.
3. Music is difficult to describe in nonmusical means (i.e. words). As Elvis Costello has observed "writing about music is like dancing about architecture." In the same with emotions, it's hard to put feeling into words.
4. People's concepts of music do not always match the way they perform and experience music. This is where emotions play an important role. Without emotion, everyone would feel and have the same experiences. Some can get emotionally involved in the opera to the point of tears, for example, while other just enjoy listening to it.

Many music lovers insist that music is best appreciated if we do not define it, analyze it or expect it to communicate anything at all. So what does music have to tell us? It offers a record of history and

human experiences that words & images cannot. Also, music has a unique ability to convey memory. Both song text and tunes can remind us of people, places and events, accessing an ancient “hard drive” of historical memory. But without emotions, the memories wouldn’t hold meaning for us.

We must always respect the fact that for many people music is just music and it acts on them in way that are personal and individual through our emotions. Yet researchers have found that music is often “implicated”, or repurposed for different ideas and agendas beyond its original conception. For example, Richard Wagner’s music was used by the Nazis to express notions of Aryan supremacy in Germany. Music has been used to strengthen the power of governments, sell cars, formant revolution, and convert souls to a particular religion. Music does not just acts as a mirror of the culture that created it, it “performs” that culture.

So, what is the heart and soul of music? What makes music, music? I’d say it would be our emotions. Without music touching our emotions, making us happy or sad for example, music would just be a noise in the background of our lives.