

MUS 735

Discussion - Hitchcock, Chapter 11

Jim Novak

3.28.21

Choose (and post links for) two contrasting pieces of “Third Stream” style from the text or other sources and discuss what you feel are the key features of each as they pertain to jazz and concert music.

How does today’s “sampling” differ from collage music? Or does it? Post examples of each to support your position.

“Third Stream” describes a movement that occurred in America in the late 1950’s and early 1960’s. Gunther Schuller coined the term, which describes the synthesis of classical and jazz music. Schuller found that many classical musicians didn’t want to taint their genre with elements of jazz, and many jazz musicians felt the same way about classical music, so Third Stream was his way of creating a new style that would appease both schools of thought.

I decided to start with *Transformation*, by Gunther Schuller. Instrumentation for this piece is as follows: flute, clarinet, tenor saxophone, bassoon, horn, trombone, vibes, harp, piano, double bass, and percussion (which turns into drum set).

This piece starts out with a series of scattered, dissonant entrances in the winds, sounding almost as if it was serial in composition. Fragments of jazz ideas and harmonies are introduced, becoming more and more frequent, and building to rehearsal E, where the drum set plays a constant straight-ahead swing pattern, the bass begins to walk, the piano comps heavily, and the vibes improvise. If I had started listening at rehearsal E, I would think this was a hard bop piece. At this point, I found myself really enjoying the piece, and I felt “at home” with it. When the horns come back in, the piece becomes much more conflicted, dissonant, and irregular in time.

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=FzTYSpCqpd4>

In contrast, I listened to *Seven Studies on Themes of Paul Klee*, also by Schuller. In this multi-movement work, Schuller attempts to musically represent seven paintings by Swiss artist Paul Klee.

Schuller uses some interesting tone painting techniques, such as writing polytonal open fifths that give the piece both a sense of calm and unease. In his second study, “Abstract Trio,”

Schuller writes almost the entire movement for three instruments at a time, and which three instruments are playing changes over the course of the movement, from a lighter sound to dark. His third movement, “Little Blue Devil,” was played by a more traditional jazz rhythm section, but it almost sounded like they were playing a twelve-tone row. I feel like Schuller really bridges both genres masterfully in this work, and I found I enjoyed it quite a bit. I recommend this video, as it allows you to see the art and hear the music simultaneously.

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=IjBPmoK6zA>

Collage Music is the combination of music from different historical eras, musical styles, and composition, so that when combined, the listener can hear the different textures and elements, rather than the work sounding cohesive and uniform. It creates the feeling of recognizing the new work, while still remembering the individual works that contribute to it.

I decided to use Lukas Foss’ *Baroque Variations*, movement 3: *Phorion*. Interestingly, according to Foss, the term Phorion means “stolen goods” in Greek. In this movement, Foss takes J.S. Bach’s Solo Violin Partita in E Major, and interrupts it several times, comically, with musical animal sounds. Honestly, I found myself irritated by this piece until I saw what Foss was doing with it. I enjoyed it more upon subsequent listenings.

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=BM-Lrv45JEs>

Sampling is reusing a portion, or sample, of a different recording. Collage Music and sampling are works that use the materials of other composers or songwriters to create new music. In theory, the method and end result seems the same. Here is a more modern example of sampling that I didn’t know about. Many of us know *Gangsta’s Paradise* by Coolio:

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=2LJg9UvoKvk>

But I didn’t know that this was sampled from Steve Wonder’s *Pastime Paradise*, written in 1976

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=b0S4SiLxt1s>

To me, the process and end-result of Collage Music and sampling seem to be the same: a piece that is not entirely original. The difference that I can see between the two, though, is in recognizing the original composer or songwriter’s intellectual property. In Collage Music, the original composers seem to be recognized, whereas in sampling, the original songwriters are often not given credit for their original work.