

Music According to D'Olivet

Music considered speculatively is defined by the ancients as the knowledge of the order which exists in everything, the science of the harmonious correspondences throughout the universe and rests upon a law so great that nothing can be carried farther than that law. Damon spoke of music as containing within itself all kinds of education. It was not through exterior form or development that music exercised power, but by the principles constituting it.

Intellectual and celestial music was the application of principle and speculative music had as its object the contemplation of nature, and knowledge of the unchangeable laws of the Universe. Brought to its highest perfection it constituted a link between the known and the unknown, an easy way of communication between two worlds. These principles were exemplified with extreme simplicity. Each teacher had his system and his particular intonation according to the country and the time. Pope Gregory gave the first elements of modern music, and the chant named for him. This chant still rules our melody and it gave birth to harmony.

Music's power was not through the succession of sounds in melodious sequence, but was, in truth, the thought which presided over this succession. All arts but put into form that which first exists as intelligence. Poetry brings from earth to heaven: particularizes that which is universal. Music raises from earth to heaven: universalizes that which poetry renders particular.

The thought of genius is found in sacred melody and its true sphere is in the temple.

Oriental Christians (Armenians) gave the invention of their music to an old patriarch living above 364 who received it from the Spirit. This music, according to those able to judge, is of the best existing in the Orient today.

Orientalists generally have many chants in the forms of recitations. The old Greeks distinguished three kind of chants, one purely musical, of modulated sounds, another oratorical not modulated, a third including both and having a poetic recitation. When poets improvised or recited they employed a musical instrument to sustain the voice.

The Ming dynasty commenced in 1370 and at this time a musical enthusiast revived and rehabilitated the ancient Chinese music resulting in the musical system followed today. Its principle is called Koungh, which is the luminous way, the center from which all emanates and to which all returns, responding in sound to our fa. It is comparable to nothing (Rein) that is, the masculine nature and depends on the "Yang" or the perfect odd number mysteriously represented by the whole lines, as contrasted to "Ying," the broken lines. The resulting measures, intonations, etc.

follow the style of 8000 years previous, and certainly it is not by chance that in Plato's time Egypt exhibited a similar musical rendition.

It is said that all Arts and that of Music in particular, only imitate nature. This is true only when one passes beyond the physical phenomena to the beauty and intelligence of which sensible objects are but the reflections. It is only when seeking to embody intellectual beauty that one becomes creative and elevates nature to the sublime. Take for example, the Raphael Transfiguration.

The triumph of art is not to imitate nature but to raise and elevate it by giving to it that which it does not possess and thereby raises it to a sphere less circumscribed and more noble. We understand this most easily though music. The model which the musical composer imitates is in his soul. Who seeks there will find. If that model lacks anything for him it is vain to believe that it may be found outside. Believe that, according to the quality of the will, the talent will be born which, if directed by genius, knows no obstacle.

Taste will be born according to the reactions from circumstances under which you find yourself placed. Taste is always relative. Believe me there is no effect without cause, nothing can be born from nothing, and it is impossible to find in a thing anything which you have not put there.

Music has been called a universal language, and in a sense, it is. One can communicate through its means sentiments, affections, even emotions; and, this is noteworthy, its appeal is general and not particular. Without poetry musical ideas are indeterminate; that is why the ancients always united the two. Perfect music comprises three things: speech to determine the idea, the chant to determine the sentiment, and rhythmic movement to characterize the experience. Follow the advice that I give you and never separate these three sisters who ardently love and grace are another.

Seek, work, be untiring.