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“Classical Music”: How Can One Phrase Mean So Much?

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“Classical Music”: How Can One Phrase Mean So Much?

Annotated Bibliography

Struble, John Warthen. “Can Serious Music Survive?” *Musical America*, July 1991.

Mr Struble states in this periodical that modern classical musicians, “Are not willing to accept the possibility that ‘classical’ music, as we know it, might have to die out.” One of his main points claims that most classical musicians are resistant to change, making their music culturally obsolete. He believes that we should instead ask people to, “support ‘serious’ music.” This distinction between the words classical and serious prove that even Mr. Struble has a bias, and one that leans away from the term classical.

Thomas, Lorenzo. “‘Classical Jazz’ and the Black Arts Movement.” *African American Review*, no. 2 (Summer 1995): 237-240.

Thomas states here that he does not think jazz is a classical music now, but that as it gains popularity and as time passes the complexity of jazz music is raising to a level equal to the “European symphonic tradition.” This provides an interesting talking point, can ‘popular’ music become so complicated that it becomes a ‘classical’ music?

Wang, Juan. “Classical Music: A Norm of ‘Common’ Culture Embedded in Cultural Consumption and Cultural Diversity.” *International Review of the Aesthetics and Sociology of Music*, no. 2 (December 2016): 195-250.

Classical music has long belonged to only the elite, those with the means of interacting with it on a constant level. Wang theorizes that if this was thrown away, and music became apart of everyday life in America, that it would help foster cultural diversity. This

proposes another way to 'save' classical music, but is not practical, leaving us to look for other ways and means to help revive a dying art form.

Taylor, William "Billy". "Jazz: America's Classical Music." *The Black Perspective in Music*, no. 1 (Winter 1986): 21-25.

Dr. Taylor expresses in this article his belief that Jazz contains all of the complexities and idioms that classical music has, making it a "serious music". Furthermore, Dr. Taylor is especially interested in jazz being apart of America's national identity, making it essentially "our classical music", based on its cultural significance. This is the basis for the argument, can music create culture? And is classical music just cultured music of separate nations?

Porsteinsson, Borgar. "U.S. Music Sales By Genre." Recording Industry Association of America. Last modified Feb 1st, 2014. <https://datamarket.com/data/set/28ny/us-music-sales-by-genre#!ds=28ny!2rsw=7.8.5.2.1&display=line>

Chart displaying the percent of total sales for all recognized genres of music from 1989 to 2008 in the United States. Classical music consistently composes around 1% of total music sales, the only other genres selling less are children's music, new age, and oldies. The abysmal percentage of record sales in classical music in the States further provides proof that classical music is not a widely recognized form of music in America.

Chanan, Michael. "Television's Problem with (Classical) Music." *Popular Music*, no.3 (October 2002): 367-374.

Michael Chanan was a music critic for television music for 30+ years. A major argument presented here is that television has forced classical music into the backseat of the whole

picture, moving musicians into the background and divorcing normal people from recognizing classical music as a performed music. This article also states my exact argument against the term classical music, that the term is too broad to be effectively used.

Scales, Amanda. “Are the Copyright Act and Performing Rights Organizations Killing Classical Music?” *Vanderbilt Journal of Entertainment and Technology Law*, no. 3 (Spring 2005): 281-299

When we examine the works in the classical music repertoire, we often find that composers have quoted others in their works (particularly those of Bach, Mozart, and Brahms). These quotations add to the audiences experience listening, as it elaborates on works or melodies they may already know. Scales argues that with copyright laws, this is no longer a viable option for classical composers, and restricts them. There is also an in-depth examination of the difference the recording companies make between “song-writers” and “composers”. These laws and procedures that are set up severely cut the amount of people that are able to obtain classical music, and one is left to ask, if classical composers were paid on the same scales as popular songwriters, would there be a larger amount of sales of classical music records? And if they were the same, would they still need the term “classical”?

Bayles, Martha. “What’s Wrong with Being Classical?” *The Antioch Review*, no. 3 (Summer 1999): 319-326.

A little dubiously titled in this bibliography, Martha Bayles is actually discussing what is wrong with jazz being considered classical. Her conclusion is that it isn't, that jazz has

the same ultimate goals as the music of the romantics, to evoke feelings inside the listeners. I would continue to argue that the same goes for popular music now, which again calls the term “classical music” into question. If classical and popular music have the same goals, are they really so different after all?

Eatock, Colin. “The ‘Death’ Of Classical Music.” *Queen’s Quarterly*, no. 3 (Fall 2002): 403-409.

Eatock presents common claims amongst scholars of whether or not classical music is dead. Of note here is Classical FM, which presents “dumbed-down” material, but does attract viewers. Notice the use of classical in the radio stations name, presenting the counter argument, is it not the word but in fact how we present our music that decreases ticket sales?

Young, James O. “How Classical Music is Better than Popular Music.” *Philosophy*, no. 4 (October 2016): 523-540.

Young states that classical music’s superiority comes from it’s “greater potential for expressiveness and, consequently, has more potential for psychological insight and profundity.” This further provides proof of classical musicians creating a sense of elitism around the music, making it difficult for newer audiences to engage with them.

Albright, Charlie. “‘Classical’ Music is Dying...and that’s the Best Thing for Classical Music.” *CNN Wire Service*, 2016.

<https://www.cnn.com/2016/05/29/opinions/classical-music-dying-and-being-reborn-opinion-albright/index.html>

Mr. Albright is convinced that the only way for classical music to save itself is to take away concert etiquette and making the experience more enjoyable for the listeners. This article also calls our attention to a very certain class divide seen between classical and popular music.

Horowitz, Joseph. "Classical Music in America: A History of Its Rise and Fall." New York, NY: W.W. Norton & Company, 2005.

Horowitz theorizes here that classical music ceased to be relevant once the general public began to gravitate towards individual performers versus the people writing the music they performed. This would be a good explanation why there are so many popular single people acts in the American popular music scene, and why symphony attendance is low, since there are often no glorified persons in a standard symphony orchestra. Another place to follow up would be to check mid-tier orchestra ticket sales for regular concerts versus guest soloist concerts.