MUSEUM PIECES: THE HISTORICIST MAINSTREAM IN MUSIC OF THE LAST HUNDRED YEARS

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The twentieth century appears to present the longest sustained period of chaos in the history of Western art music. At other times, after a transition from the previous way of doing things, composers have arrived at a consensus for a new style, a style which may be flavored differently in different regions but which is based on similar conceptions of taste throughout Europe and its satellites. The late 1800s and early 1900s were characterized by the diversity, rapid change, idiosyncrasy, and polemic associated with such a period of transition, but the music which followed seemed only to intensify its diversity and accelerate the pace of change. There has been no consensus for a new style, for a shared approach to music, or even for a common understanding of what music should sound like or do.

In no other period have composers used such a variety of musical languages and techniques, creating music which differs so radically from the music of their contemporaries. In no other period have individual composers changed their own styles so radically and so often, sometimes transforming their musical language almost completely from one work to the next. In no other period has art music been so divorced from other traditions. In no other period has so much music by so many talented composers been so hated, so ignored, so little played or understood. In no other period has it seemed so impossible to locate a mainstream, a central line of development or a common conceptual tradition, which can provide a framework for understanding the contributions of individual composers. We speak of "modern music," "contemporary music," "new music," or "20th-century music," aware of the contradiction of referring to seventy-year-old works as "new" and recognizing the vast amount of contemporary music we intuitively exclude from these categories: jazz, popular music, music for the movies, and even that art music whose "conservative" musical language seems more typical of the 19th century than of the 20th. We use these names because we have no other for the specific repertoire we have in mind. We cannot find a mainstream, cannot define what binds this diverse group of composers together, and thus cannot find any other label.

Yet there *is* a mainstream of 20th-century music, one which held sway from the closing decades of the 19th century through the Second World War and has continued to have great influence. It is a mainstream in the

sense not of a shared style but of shared concerns, an intellectual tradition in the widest sense rather than a stylistic tradition. The mainstream of the past one hundred years consists of music written for an audience familiar with the art music of the 18th and 19th centuries, by composers who were or are themselves highly informed members of that audience, who wrote or write music with a concern both for continuing the tradition of European art music, particularly its aesthetic assumptions and its understanding of the relationship between artist and audience, and for distinguishing their own work stylistically from other composers, both predecessors and contemporaries. In a word, the mainstream is *historicist:* these composers are writing music for a museum, for that is what the concert hall has become.

II

While it has roots in previous centuries, the intellectual tradition of historicism among composers arose in the 19th century, in conjunction with the gradual development of a concert audience primarily familiar with the music of dead composers. I emphasize the concert as the center of this development for two reasons. First, the musical traditions of our own time—art music, popular music, the avant garde, jazz, folk music, church and synagogue music, Muzak, and the other traditions we encounter—overlap and borrow from each other in the way the music actually sounds and is structured. The clearest way to distinguish among these traditions, then, is not to focus exclusively on the music itself, but rather to pay attention to the function and atmosphere of the concert or other social context in which the music is performed.[1] Second, it was primarily in the concert hall that the shift of taste away from new music by living composers and towards the "classical masters" and the simultaneous split between classical ("serious") and popular streams were engineered.

William Weber has recently argued that "the new respect for the masters was as much a commercial as an artistic phenomenon," growing "directly from the burgeoning industries of music publishing, instrument manufacture, and concert management."[2] Music-making, which at the turn of the 19th century had still depended upon one-to-one relationships—for instance, scores had typically been distributed through professional contacts or subscriptions rather than through retail outlets, and even Beethoven's public concerts attracted mainly his students and sponsors—came to be exploited in the new century as an art with mass appeal for a mass market,

[1]Focussing on the concert has the advantage that differences are intuitively obvious, in contrast to other possible social aspects of music such as the distribution of instruments, sheet music, and recordings, or even the means by which musicians are paid. In this paper, I will not discuss the playing of recordings or performances on radio or television, as their primary role seems to be to extend the public concert to a wider and even more privatized audience. When recordings or radio broadcasts are used as background music to conversation or work, of course, the function of the music is changed, as attention is not focussed on the music in the same way as in a concert; this is one reason why very demanding or unfamiliar music, a category which includes much of the music of this century, is inappropriate for use as a background. The recent rise of true wallpaper music, such as Brian Eno's *Airport Music,* is an intelligent solution to this problem. However, the whole question of music as background to the activities of daily life is beyond the scope of this paper.

[2]William Weber, "Mass Culture and the Reshaping of European Musical Taste, 1770-1870," *International Review of the Aesthetics and Sociology of Music* VIII (1977), 6. In this paragraph, I summarize the entire article, pp. 5-21.

at least on the professional level. Up to roughly mid-century, Weber explains, the scene was dominated by virtuosi like Spohr and Hummel, who churned out great quantities of "brilliant but not difficult" music for the mass market of amateur players and advertised their works through concert tours. This mass-market music was long on style and polish but short on brains; while the concert audience in Mozart's day included both connoisseurs and those less knowledgeable, and all elements of the audience could find pleasure in a single work of art,[3] the new mass audience was more hostile to connoisseurship, and there was little in the music of virtuoso composer-performers to engage the attention of the musically intelligent. In reaction, more serious musicians turned back to Beethoven, Mozart, and Haydn, creating the concept of the "master" and the "masterpiece" in music and deifying these three (and, to a lesser extent, Bach) as the geniuses of a great musical art. The "Old Masters" and their promoters won the field after the middle of the century, largely owing to the efforts of the first generation of great conductors, virtuosi in their own right who could mobilize a growing musically literate public including both amateur performers and trained listeners and gather large concert audiences for "classic" music.[4] Thus, the concert, which had been an entertainment in Mozart's day and a spectacle in Spohr's, took on the atmosphere of a lecture, requiring background study and concentration on the part of audiences and emphasizing the intellectual, aesthetic, and uplifting aspects of the music played. Serious music became something to be "understood" rather than merely enjoyed, and every member of the audience became, at least to some extent, a connoisseur. Popular music, turned out of the concert halls by the new seriousness of intent, took refuge where popular music has since stayed—nightclubs, music halls, musical theater, and so on—and the current dichotomy between "serious" and "popular" music, never before known in the field of composed concert music, became solidified. Only in opera did serious and popular intent continue to coincide, at least through the turn of the 20th century; elsewhere, music was no longer offered to an audience including both tutored and untutored listeners.

The understanding Weber provides us of the changing relationship of composer and audience in the 19th century is essential to a study of the music of the past hundred years. By the last quarter of the 19th century, the concert hall was primarily a museum for the display of works of art from previous generations, rather than a forum for the new. Weber gives statistics which show that around the turn of the century, almost 80% of the music performed in Vienna, Leipzig, Paris, and London was by living composers, while after mid-century the figure was almost exactly the opposite.[5] The building of the great concert halls, often with the names of

[3]Weber, p. 16, cites the famous letter of 28 December 1782 from Mozart to his father which refers to his recent concertos as "a happy medium between what is too easy and too difficult ... . There are passages here and there from which connoisseurs alone can derive satisfaction; but these passages are written in such a way that the less learned cannot fail to be pleased, without knowing why."

[4]The common origin of the two popular meanings of the phrase "classical music"—referring to serious concert music as a whole and to the period of Haydn, Mozart, and Beethoven in particular—is obvious here.

[5]Weber, pp. 18-19.

dead composers, the demi-gods of music, chiseled into the walls, coincides with the building of the great museums and libraries of Europe and America in the latter 19th century and the first decades of the 20th; their parallel function as cultural shrines is clear.[6] The essential problem for a composer became not how to write music to please a specific audience in the present—which had been the problem facing composers since the beginnings of Western music—but rather how to win space in the museum, hung on the wall next to the "classics," with an expectation of permanent display.

III

It is important to remember that the composers writing "serious" music in the latter 19th century were themselves members of the audience for "classic" music, and participated enthusiastically in the revival of old music as performers, editors, and sponsors. They admired their immediate predecessors, emulated their music, and competed with them for attention and performances, as artists in each generation have done. But, beginning with the generation of Brahms, composers began to study, admire, and emulate the composers of the previous several centuries as well.[7] In the late-19th-century concert hall, composers of all periods were suddenly contemporaries: the music of the Viennese classic composers was still being played, Bach and Palestrina were being revived, and new works had to win a place next to not only the music which formed the core of the unbroken tradition of public concerts, from Handel's *Messiah* through the operas of Wagner, but also music which was from one to three centuries old but unfamiliar and therefore "new." In response to this situation came an approach to music-making which is uniquely esoteric among the musical traditions of the world, fundamentally concerned not with music as a social art nor with the audiences which hear such music, but with the pursuit of a musical ideal inherited from historical models, engaging in an almost ritual purification of the art.

The late 19th century viewed the experience of music as an individual one, an aesthetic experience of art for its own sake rather than a shared social experience. Although the members of a concert audience are many, their experience is ultimately not collective, as is the musical experience of group singing or dancing or of outdoor entertainment at a fair, but essentially private, as each sits still, listens, and is moved. Like a passionate orator, in this view, the music speaks to each listener directly. The new

[6]The rise of the historicist concert has parallels to the earlier rise of art collecting, since the museum is the ultimate result of each. There is a provocative new history of art collecting by Joseph Alsop, entitled *The Rare Art Tradition: The History of Art Collecting and Its Linked Phenomena Wherever These Have Appeared* (Princeton, 1982), which I first encountered in a review by E. H. Gombrich, "The Art of Collecting Art," *The New York Review of Books* XXIX:19 (December 2, 1982), 39-42. My thanks to Alexander Silbiger for mentioning this review to me.

[7]While there are early signs of emulating long-dead composers in composers of the generation of Mendelssohn, Schumann, and Wagner, its first full flowering is in the next generation, particularly in the figures of Brahms in Germany and perhaps César Franck in France. Elsewhere, I argue that Brahms is the first great composer of the modernist tradition, serving as a model for later generations of what music is and is for and how composers write music and become established: "'A Place Beside Beethoven': Brahms and Twentieth-Century Classical Music," public lecture, University of Wisconsin-Madison, February 14, 1983.

concert decorum of reverent silence reflected this new conception of the private nature of musical experience.[8]

Just as the experience of music as a listener was regarded as an individual one, so each composer was considered to speak with an individual voice. This is a characteristic of the Romantic century, no less for the composers of past eras than for composers of the present. It was for their ability to speak to the listener in a way unlike any other composer then known that the works of such composers as Bach and Palestrina were valued. Whether the conception of music as a private experience was part of Palestrina's aesthetic, or Bach's, is not important here; this was the conception which underlay the new seriousness in the late-19th-century concert hall, and music which was performed in that context was understood according to its terms, however anachronistic.[9] Arranged as peers on a concert program, Palestrina, Bach, Mozart, Beethoven, and Schumann each seemed to find an individual solution to the common problem of creating musical works of lasting value, using similar materials of harmony, melody, and motive, and similar technical procedures of counterpoint, elaboration, combination, change, and articulation. The composers whose music was revived were judged less as representatives of aesthetic principles essentially opposed to those of the concert music of an industrial middle class than as individual voices speaking in fresh ways; it was the distinctly personal styles of Bach and Handel which were revived first, rather than the general, less differentiated styles of the 18th-century common language.

Of course, the problem of creating musical works of lasting value was not in fact the problem that most of the master composers had sought to solve in their music. An often far more urgent problem was to create music which had current value, however ephemeral: providing music for a specific function, whether that be ceremony, worship, public entertainment, dancing, or amateur music-making. When they were revived, however, the works of dead composers had lost whatever original social function they had served and were valued exclusively as autonomous works of art. Once the concert hall became a museum, the only works appropriate to be performed there were *museum pieces*—either pieces which were already old and revered or pieces which served exactly the same function, as *musical works of lasting value which proclaimed a distinctive musical personality, which rewarded study, and which became loved as they became familiar.*

While the question of lasting value had been an important, but secondary concern in the minds of most of the composers who came to be valued in the 19th century, for the composers writing music specifically for the museum, in the generations from Brahms to the present, it became the

[8]Weber contrasts the atmosphere of the "Promenade" concerts in European cities of the 1830s, where conversation, taking refreshment, and wandering the aisles were perfectly acceptable (p. 13), with concerts after 1850, when an expanding corps of highly-trained listeners no longer tolerated noise (p. 19).

[9]Apparently the equally anachronistic concept of "historically correct" concert performance—anachronistic because nothing in history corresponds to the 19th- and 20th-century public concert in social function—is a child of mid-20th-century musicology. It is perfectly obvious that a concert of Monteverdi's *Orfeo* performed on original instruments is a living museum display, like the living museums at Plimoth Colony or Conner Prairie.

sole problem to solve, the sole purpose of composition. The thread of tradition, in which each generation of artists used the music of the previous generation as models and then struck out in new directions, was transformed; both emulation and renewal acquired a new character during the transformation of the concert hall into a museum. A young composer of this time had not only living models but dead and deified ones, whose importance in the tradition was emphasized by their having survived the fabled "test of time." United across time by their having been admitted into the canon of performed music, the recognized masterpieces and their composers seemed to be distinguished from their lesser contemporaries by their level of craftsmanship, by the strength of their musical personality, and by an ineffable quality of "inspiration," "beauty," or "truth." Further, they seemed to have gained their status as "classical," their place on the walls of the musical museum, through these characteristics alone, rather than for the historical reasons Weber has elucidated.[10] Thus, it appeared that by emulating these qualities a young composer could hope to meet the requirements for entrance and could win space in the permanent collection. While "inspiration" could hardly be studied and practiced, young composers could and did devote themselves to perfecting their craft—which meant learning technique from the "masters" of composition—and developing a distinctive personal style.

In short, younger composers modelled their activities on what they perceived composers of previous eras to have done: they sought to create music in the tradition of art music which would say something new, while incorporating what was best and most useful from the music of the past.[11] Surrounded by museum pieces, they sought to create museum pieces. In the process, in appealing to the past for inspiration and the future for acceptance, they ignored the goal which the composers they sought to emulate had kept uppermost in their minds: creating music which had current value for an audience in the present and fulfilled a social role above and beyond its value as art. In taking this step, Brahms, Franck, Schoenberg, and their followers developed the uniquely esoteric tradition associated with modernist "classical" music. Communication with an audience became secondary as the ideal of creating music of lasting value became paramount.

IV

The pressure to find a distinctive, recognizable personal style, to discover an individual or even unique solution to the problem of musical composition, has precluded the development in the 20th century of a unified

[10]Perhaps chief among these reasons is the advocacy of a coterie of enthusiasts who promote the music of an individual composer. The composers who have "made it" into the repertoire since the mid-1800s, from Josquin to Bartok, have not done so merely because their music is of high quality, but because it has had powerful support.

[11]No one has stated this more clearly than Schoenberg, a member of the second generation of museum-oriented composers: "My originality comes from this: I immediately imitated everything that was good ... . I worked on it and extended it, and it led me to something new. I am convinced that eventually people will recognize how immediately this 'something new' is linked to the loftiest models that have been granted us. I venture to credit myself with having written truly new music which, being based on tradition, is destined to become tradition." "National Music (2)," *Style and Idea*, rev. ed. by Leonard Stein (New York, 1975), p. 174. See my discussion of Schoenberg in "Schoenberg the Reactionary," lecture, University of Wisconsin-Madison, September 15, 1982.

approach to music, much less a unified style or technique. In the central German tradition, the response to the new awareness of several generations of composers and their music was to view past styles and composers as participants in the forward progress of music, and to try to continue its development. This view, while similar in attitude to the views of Charles Burney in the late 18th century,[12] derived much of its power from the influence of Hegelian philosophy and related 19th-century ideas, including theories of biological and social evolution, and was characterized by a belief in the necessity and virtue of progress and discovery. This belief underlies Webern's lectures on the origins of the atonal and twelve-tone music of the Second Vienna School,[13] and the similar essays and statements by Alban Berg[14] and Arnold Schoenberg,[15] whose works lie at the center of the 20th-century Germanic tradition in music. The heightened dissonance of Richard Strauss and Arnold Schoenberg, the expanded forms of Gustav Mahler and Anton Bruckner, the concentrated expression of Hugo Wolf and Anton Webern, the dense polyphonic development of motive and idea in all of these composers, were each extensions of the traditional language in directions which earlier composers had already begun to explore, extensions which were suggested to the younger composers by their study of past masters and defended by them as historically inevitable. The new styles, different though they were from each other, each seemed to develop and fulfill trends in earlier music in the same way that Beethoven or Bach had done in their music, and, on the basis of the belief in musical progress, were justified by analogy to the individual contributions of their greatest predecessors—in fact, are still justified in those terms today. The ideology of progressivism, of course, depends upon a certain view of history; unlike previous stylistic revolutions in the name of greater expressivity or simplicity, the progressivist revolution at the end of the 19th century was deeply historicist.[16]

The ideology included an emphasis on technical innovations and compositional "firsts" over other aspects of music—an emphasis reflected in most current textbooks on 20th-century music (as well as music of earlier periods)—which has its origins in the situation of 19th-century concert life as I have described it. Composers from Palestrina to Schumann who were brought into the museum were all seen as absorbed in the common problem of creating musical works of lasting value; the historical meanings of differences in their musical style were suppressed, and those differences came

[12]*A General History of Music From the Earliest Ages to the Present Time* (London, 1789).

[13]*The Path to the New Music*, trans. by Leo Black, ed. by Willi Reich (Bryn Mawr, 1963).

[14]"Why Is Schoenberg's Music So Hard to Understand?", trans. by Anton Swarowsky and Joseph H. Lederer, *The Music Review* XIII (1952), 187-96. Reprinted in Elliott Schwartz and Barney Childs, eds., *Contemporary Composers on Contemporary Music* (New York, 1967), pp. 59-71. The last paragraph shows best Berg's belief in progress.

[15]"I knew I had the duty of developing my ideas for the sake of progress in music" ("How One Becomes Lonely," *Style and Idea*, rev. ed., p. 53); this is only one of several such references to the necessity of progress in Schoenberg's writings.

[16]The progressivist revolution occurred simultaneously with a movement for greater expressivity (as in Strauss' tone poems and operas) and an anti-Romantic movement for austerity and greater simplicity (for instance, in Satie). These trends intertwine; if the concert hall had not turned into a museum during the 19th century, there probably would have been an important style change around 1900 anyway, but the flavor of the change would have been different, remaining uninfluenced by historicism's sense of crisis.

to be seen primarily in terms of technique. This allowed composers to emulate, combine, and extend earlier procedures without a sense of anachronism—Johannes Brahms is the first great example of this,[17] and Schoenberg, Reger, Hindemith, Orff, and other composers central to the German tradition followed in his footsteps—and spurred the development of new techniques virtually as an end in themselves, culminating in a new tradition of experimental music which gradually gained prominence after the Second World War.[18] Thus, the stylistic revolution which launched the music of our century was doubly unique in Western music history: it was not only historicist, but was also motivated by a much larger interest on the part of both composers and commentators in the techniques of composition than in any other aspect of music, an emphasis which seems opposite to that of the other major style changes since the Middle Ages, where changes in technique have followed changes of artistic or social purpose.[19]

Progressivism was the predominant solution to the problem of finding a distinctive, recognizable personal style within the central German-Austrian tradition. For composers outside of Germany and Austria, individuality could be partially achieved through the incorporation of ideas, sounds, or techniques from outside the central tradition. This took three principal forms, each of which is related to the others: exoticism (including the incorporation or non-Western of pseudo-non-Western music, medieval music, and jazz), which was particularly important in France and Russia; nationalism, important in the peripheral countries of Europe and North America; and the incorporation of folk elements, an important part of some composers' styles. Yet what determines the centrality of modern composers within the historicist mainstream is not so much their sources of individuality as their emulation of the great masters of European art music. The closer the models an historicist composer of any nation chooses are themselves to the central, mostly German tradition of the 18th and 19th centuries, the closer his own works will be to the central tradition of the 20th. It is the composers who chose Beethoven, Mozart, and Bach as models for their own highly innovative compositions whom we, in turn, most deeply respect and choose to study—Schoenberg, Berg, and Webern, of course, but also Hindemith, Strauss, Stravinsky, Bartok, and Ives.[20]

Thus, I want to turn the traditional method of writing histories of 20th-century music on its head. I do not hold with the progressivist view of history, a view which most of the composers of this period themselves believed in. Instead, I view art music, like any other kind of music, in terms of its social role. I do not hold with the conventional idea that what

[17]See my paper on Brahms, mentioned above in note 7, for a discussion of Brahms' emulation and its importance for modernism in music.

[18]I discuss experimental music below, in section VII.

[19]It could be argued that the rise of historicism represents just such a change in social or artistic purpose. This is undeniable. However, technical changes were made for their own sake, not because of direct influences from new settings and uses for music, as would be true of the rise of monody, the galant style of the 18th century, and other major points of change. Illustrative of this is the scholarly concentration on the technical side of early 20th-century music, often from the point of view of music theory, rather than on new aesthetic ideas or social settings.

[20]This is less true of France and Italy, where composers have of course emulated primarily the past art music of their own nations.

is most important about 20th-century music is its new techniques, and thus that histories should emphasize the new, the original, the progressive. Far more important for our ultimate understanding of this music, of individual works as well as the music of the past century as a whole, is its role in the museum and its relationship to the past. This music's progressivism is very deeply intertwined with emulation.

V

While there were pressures on young composers to be different, to create a unique and therefore recognizably personal style as a requirement for admission to the museum's collection, there were pressures operating in the other direction as well. Composers could not afford to be *too* different, for mere difference did not justify inclusion in the museum of art music. The music of Johann Strauss was new and fresh, and the noise-based music of Luigi Russolo and other Italian futurists seemed more like "air from other planets" than anything Schoenberg ever wrote, but clearly neither belonged in the museum. New works had to be seen to take part in the tradition, to continue the manner of composing and thinking about music which characterized the master composers. Craftsmanship was an essential part of that link to the tradition which younger composers had to prove; it is no coincidence that attacks on modern composers have consistently accused the new works of displaying shoddy craftsmanship. The pursuit of craft, defined as skill in constructing musical works along the lines of compositions by master composers, is by its nature emulative. Emulation is in no sense new in the 20th century; as I have argued, it is part of what makes the tradition a tradition, and examples are easy to find in early music and in the Baroque and Classical masters as well as in Brahms and later composers.[21] However, when emulation is extended to include modelling individual works on specific pieces by dead composers, or writing music in forms found in traditions of composition which had been revived after falling out of the repertoire—for instance, Brahms' chaconne in the last movement of his Fourth Symphony, Webern's *Passacaglia,* the Baroque dances in Ravel's *Le Tombeau de Couperin* or Schoenberg's Piano Suite, Op. 25, Stravinsky's concertos, even (to stretch a point) Berio's *Sinfonia*—the result is something new to the music of the last hundred years: music which is "neo-classical" in the broad sense of the term.[22] This music, no less and in fact more obviously than progressivist music, is deeply historicist.

There are virtues in distinguishing music which is predominantly progressive (such as Schoenberg's *Erwartung*) from music which is predominantly emulative or neo-classic (such as Strauss' *Ariadne auf Naxos*) and

[21]These examples range from the type of emulation, current in the 15th century, which Howard Mayer Brown discusses in "Emulation, Competition, and Homage: Imitation and Theories of Imitation in the Renaissance," *Journal of the American Musicological Society* XXXV (1982), 8, to the harmonic and rhythmic echoes of Beethoven's Symphony No. 7 which Nicholas Temperly traces through several works of Schubert in "Schubert and Beethoven's Eight-Six Chords," *19th Century Music* V (1981), 142-54.

[22]There are some precedents for neo-classicism, notably in Rameau's revival of *tragédie lyrique* and Berlioz' *Les Troyens,* but neo-classicism remained rare before the modernist age.

taking note as well of music which mixes the two strands (such as Berg's *Wozzeck,* progressive in style and neo-classic in borrowing archaic forms for its individual scenes). However, the currents I have described as progressivism and emulation remain two aspects of the same tradition, complementary sides of the historicist mainstream. No major composer of the century partakes of only one of these two aspects. Both address the main issue in writing music for performance in a museum, which is the pursuit of the musical ideal inherited from historical models, the creation of musical works of lasting value which are analogues or worthy successors to the masterpieces which have already entered the canon. The new music is studied and learned just as are the masterpieces; whether neo-classic or serial, the new music is judged less on first hearing than on its enduring qualities.

I have mentioned already that non-German composers had additional avenues to individuality open to them: exoticism, nationalism, and the incorporation of folk elements, each of which answered the demand for novelty by bringing into concert music aspects of other traditions. But if novelty was sufficient to gain them a hearing, it was not sufficient to gain them a place in the museum's collection; for that, again, emulation of the central tradition of the 18th and 19th centuries, and often participation in some sense in the progressive developments of the 20th, was necessary. What the incorporation of aspects of other traditions explains, for the most part, is a difference in flavor between the music of Schoenberg, for instance, and the music of Debussy, Stravinsky, Messiaen, Sibelius, Nielsen, Bartok, and Ives. For these latter composers, the issue of novelty was partly solved by where they were born and by what other musical traditions they could assimilate. Sibelius, for instance, was concerned not about the future of German music, as was Schoenberg, but the present of Finnish music; as the first great Finnish composer, he had a ready-made band of enthusiasts in his native land and felt less pressure for innovation than did German composers working in the shadow of Beethoven, Brahms, and Wagner. All of these composers, however, were also progressives in their own ways, and each emulated the music of the central tradition—in other words, like the composers of Germany and Austria, these composers justified their inclusion in the musical museum by their distinctiveness, by their quality of craftsmanship, and by their deep connection with the music already enshrined there.

VI

The view that most works written in the late 19th century and the first half of the 20th were intended to be museum pieces explains all the important distinctive features of the music of this era. The extreme stylistic diversity within the historicist mainstream is the result of each artist seeking an individual solution to the common problem of creating museum pieces; indeed, a recognizable personal style proved of great value in winning

younger composers a place in the collection.[23] Radical changes of style or technique within one composer's oeuvre can be seen to result from the same pressure for diversity and distance from the past, without contradicting the value of a recognizable personal style, for not only each composer but each individual work needed to win acceptance. As Brahms labored under the shadow of Beethoven, Stravinsky was dogged through his later career by the success of his early ballets, and his radical changes of style—despite the consistency of his basic approach[24]—can be viewed as an attempt to distinguish his new work from his own earlier music.

The view that composers of the past hundred years have written pieces for a musical museum also accounts for the enduring esoteric nature of much of this music, one of the thorniest problems in evaluating the music of this period. Created for an audience familiar with 18th- and 19th-century music, "modern music" serves in part as a commentary on or foil for that music, making less sense on its own terms than it does as a reworking or extension of familiar ideas and techniques from the tradition. A stunning example of this is the issue of the internal coherence of much of this music. Part of the value composers have placed on the masterpieces of the European tradition is their tight craftsmanship, the subtle internal relationships which are revealed through analysis. When composers such as Schoenberg and Webern sought to emulate and extend that sense of organic unity as a value in itself[25] in the context of new and unfamiliar musical procedures, they created music which is very difficult to listen to and very rewarding to analyze and study—music, that is, which is innately esoteric. It is no surprise that this music has been overwhelmingly unpopular; nor should it be any surprise that it has won a small but enthusiastic audience, an audience which shows no more signs of increasing than of going away. But it is not just the difficulty of this music which makes it esoteric. The newly-devised structures which make this music internally coherent and susceptible to analysis—motivic repetition, recurring chords and sets of notes and intervals, twelve-tone rows, new modes and modalities, rhythmic transformations, and other constructs which should make the music comprehensible on its own terms—are themselves largely comprehensible only by analogy with the procedures of past music, from which they are in fact derived by analogy, rather than through their exploitation of innate human capacities

[23]Again, there is a parallel with the visual arts; the most successful modern painters, such as Mark Rothko and Frank Stella, have evolved personal styles which are immediately recognizable, and every important collection proudly displays its Rothko and its Stella.

[24]Edward T. Cone discusses this consistency in "Stravinsky: The Progress of a Method," *Perspectives of New Music* I (1962), 19-26.

[25]See for instance Webern's comments about the discovery of natural law in composing music and the work of art as the embodiment of a perfect natural order; *The Path to the New Music*, p. 11. Joseph Kerman, in "How We Got Into Analysis, and How to Get Out," *Critical Inquiry* VII (1980), 318, comments that "Schoenberg's really decisive insight . . . was to conceive of a way of continuing the great tradition while negating what everyone else felt to be at its very core, namely, tonality. He grasped the fact that what was central to the ideology was not the triad and tonality, as Schenker and Tovey believed, but organicism."

of hearing and cognition.[26] The very search for new methods of achieving internal coherence without depending upon old forms is an act of homage to the craftsmanship of the masters of the past; paradoxically, the new elements of structure and form which seem most to declare the independence of "modern music" from its ancestry are the direct result of this emulation.[27] Both the difficulty and the hidden emulation in this music—which is as true of the neo-Baroque works of Reger and Hindemith as of the serial music of Schoenberg and his followers—make it music for connoisseurs, music which has found its audience but will never be popular. Even the neo-classic works of Stravinsky, Milhaud, or Poulenc, which are much less "difficult" to listen to, participate in the same hidden emulation and have not become appreciably more popular than the more difficult works of Berg or Ives. Its unpopularity alone does not negate the importance of this esoteric music as part of the mainstream of musical development, for among the small audience of devoted connoisseurs of esoteric music of all kinds are other serious composers themselves.[28]

There is a wide gulf between the art music of the last hundred years and popular forms of music in the same period, not only in where they are performed and for whom, but in their musical language and collection of acceptable sounds. This gulf, which would have been incomprehensible to past citizens of Paris whistling an air from a Lully opera or Italian mobs singing Verdi's "Va, pensiero," can also be consistently explained in terms of historicism. Never before the last half of the 19th century was music written for a museum. All of the historicist works, from the most difficult works of Schoenberg to the sweetest of Poulenc, function as museum pieces, works which serve no social function whatsoever beyond their status as art. There is not the slightest reason why music with such an isolated role should have anything to do with any other music except its own historical antecedents; it is esoteric, purified through the work of generations of artists creating new analogues to past musical forms and procedures, and in this

[26]That is, the internal coherence of this music makes sense not in psychological terms but only in rational terms, working by analogy with tonality, whose basis is at least partly psychological. There is a good deal of research on the psychological bases of tonal music; a good example with references to other recent work is Carol L. Krumhansl, Jamshed Bharucha, and Mary A. Castellano, "Key distance effects on perceived harmonic structure in music," *Perception & Psychophysics* XXXII (1982), 96-108. So far, the work on tonal perception by Krumhansl and others suggests that tonal theory is founded on basic psychological facts about human perception and cognition, and, conversely, that atonal music does not appear to have the same foundation. This does not mean that such a foundation will not be demonstrated in the future, nor that listeners cannot be trained to follow the pitch-related aspects of atonal music through memorization and familiarity. However, a small experiment of my own, performed in May 1977 on a group of instrumentalists without training in music theory, suggested that untrained listeners cannot recognize traditional manipulations of material—inversion, reordering, even transposition—as well as they can remember and recognize pitches. Identity of pitch proved more important than identities of shape, order, or pitch-class for perceiving similarities between paired short motives. Whether the perception of atonal music can be explained on its own psychological terms, or in any terms other than in relationship to past tonal and modal music, remains an open and fascinating question, but the early weight of evidence seems to imply a negative conclusion.

[27]My thanks to Joseph Straus for pointing out how much of a paradox this is.

[28]The situation of "modern music" as an esoteric tradition, then, is only an exaggeration of the situation of "classical music" as a whole, for the whole tradition of art music enshrined in the museum is by its nature a tradition which is learned rather than native. While the music of Schoenberg and Webern is comprehensible only in the context of Bach and Brahms, the music of more recent historicist composers, such as Charles Wuorinen, will be understood well only in the context of Schoenberg and Webern; Wuorinen has himself commented that his music will not become widely known until the music of Berg and Schoenberg is performed as often as Brahms is now. The view of music sketched out in this paper suggests that that may very well never happen.

progressive purification it inevitably loses many or all of its connections with music which serves popular tastes. Of course, by engaging in this process, a process demanded of them by the assumptions of the culture of serious music, modern composers have guaranteed their own isolation. Granted that, like all other museum pieces, their new music is distinctive, of lasting value, and rewarding to study, it must still gain its place in the permanent collection by dint of familiarity. But if there is no social function for these pieces other than as part of the museum collection, there is no chance to become familiar with them in other social settings, nor is there any other use for them.[29] When art for art's sake becomes so divorced from daily experience as modern music has become, it can still gain enthusiasts, but it is unlikely to gain many; this is one source of repeated attempts to renew it through the incorporation of elements from outside the tradition.

The unpopularity of much modern music should not lead one to assume that the historically-minded audience of the last one hundred years has been steadfastly opposed to change or to enlargement of the repertoire. Although often so characterized by modern composers, this audience is not reactionary. Quite the contrary is true: this audience has sought the new as feverishly as any audience in history, but in new ways. When the concert served as entertainment or spectacle, novelty in the pieces played was expected, but in a museum of past cultural achievements this is largely beside the point; new works are accepted and valued only as they are clearly seen to participate in the same worship of the past which the audience has come for. Within the well-known repertoire, the desire for variety has come to be satisfied by performance: rather than performers conforming to the manner of their peers and predecessors, the rule has become "make it new." With the familiar pieces, then, significant interpretive differences, almost amounting to differences in style and aesthetic, have been encouraged by the market; this corresponds exactly to the pressure on individual composers to evolve a unique, recognizable style, as performers too developed a style or "sound" which was identifiably theirs.[30] The revival of less-well-known works by dead composers became the most important source of unfamiliar scores, superseding by the mid-20th century at the latest the importance of music by the living. This revival was the service of historical musicology, a discipline which gradually arose in the 19th century and whose first task was to find and make available the great quantity of European music which had fallen out of the repertoire. Many, perhaps most, of the early musicologists were also composers. For important composers such as Brahms and Webern, study of the old masters reinforced their historicism (both progressive and emulative sides), while for less successful composers, the transcription and editing of early music provided an outlet for their skills with a ready market for the result. Most early music has remained esoteric,

[29]Most of this music is too difficult for amateurs, too unfamiliar for radio play, and too strange and demanding for background music; see note 1, above.

[30]Samuel Lipman has noted that most members of the great older generation of performers of our century are dead or retired, and that younger ones seem more often interchangeable, lacking the distinct personalities of their predecessors; "Summing Up: A Tour d'Horizon," *Music After Modernism* (New York, 1979), pp. 224-25. Is performing fame going the way of composing fame, and for similar reasons?

in the sense that names such as Leonin, Machaut, Dufay, Josquin, Monteverdi, and C.P.E. Bach are still not as familiar to concert-goers as Mozart or Verdi, but each major period of early music has found an enthusiastic audience, and there are groups all over Europe and North America which specialize in the performance of these repertoires. Only J.S. Bach among the composers whose works had fallen completely out of the repertoire has gained a central position next to Beethoven and his peers. Bach was among the earliest to be revived, at the same time that the "classical masters" were themselves being championed. Beyond this, the immense popularity of Bach's music may be due not only to its excellence but to its own sense of historicism, which made it very much more in tune with the historicist music of the late 19th century than with the music of Bach's own time. While Bach's music became anachronistic in his own age, extending the musical ideas of an earlier generation to a new level of depth and complexity amidst the growing Rococo and galant styles of the 1720s and later, it is deeply akin to the music of Brahms, who also took the musical ideals of earlier composers to new heights. The sense of transcendent craftsmanship born of careful emulation and resulting in a progressive, deeply personal style is very strong in both composers, a parallel which has been noticed before.[31]

The comparison between concerts of early music and concerts of "new music" has often been made. Both kinds of music appeal to an historically-trained audience seeking something different from the central repertoire, and the "differentness" of the music is reflected in a different concert atmosphere when compared to that of the great symphony and opera houses, a mood of less formality, a greater sense of adventure, and greater tolerance for eccentricity in both the music played and the audience which hears it. The same may be said of concerts of non-Western music, such as the classical musics of India or Persia, gamelan music from Indonesia, or African or American tribal music. The discipline of comparative musicology, or ethnomusicology, has served a similar role in bringing these musical traditions into the Western concert hall museum that historical musicology has served in bringing earlier European music back to life.[32] Indeed, all three of these kinds of music—"contemporary music," early music, and non-Western music—serve the function of providing "new music" within the larger realm of performed art music in Europe and America: each is heard as "different" from the mainstream, each is measured in some sense against the central European tradition, and each attracts a relatively small

[31]For instance, in the title and content of Robert L. Marshall's "Bach the Progressive: Observations on his Later Works," *Musical Quarterly* LXII (1976), 313-57, which echoes Schoenberg's article "Brahms the Progressive," *Style and Idea*, rev. ed., pp. 398-441. These composers are not just "conservative" but *historicist*, concerned with reviving and preserving the musical techniques and aesthetic values of a past generation. This same sense of history may explain the 19th century's fascination with Palestrina as well, since he was surely the most historicist of 16th-century composers.

[32]Non-Western music is taken out of its social context as thoroughly as old Western music when played on the concert stage. Unfortunately, many musical cultures can only be preserved in performing museums, and any such preservation naturally has bad as well as good effects. Dancing and singing in the Balkans, for instance, has been greatly altered by the rise of a generation of professional performers for whom skill and flashiness often seem to matter more than what Westerners call "authenticity."

but enthusiastic, almost cultic, following. The jocular names "pre-music" and "post-music," like the term "non-Western music," reveal both the character of these musical traditions as satellites to the central canon of art music and their role in defining that canon in part by marking its limits.

VII

There is music written in the last hundred years which does not fall into the historicist mainstream, and this music is worth a brief discussion. There are essentially three kinds. First, there is music which does not pretend to continue the tradition of "serious" music, including all forms of popular music and what might be called the tradition of the "light classics," entertainment music whose most prevalent current manifestation is Muzak. Jazz forms a special case as a potential rival to "serious" music, and has been described as the living art music tradition of our century;[33] still, it represents a distinct tradition rather than a subgroup within European art music, as its roots are deep in African music and American vernacular culture.

Second, there is music in the tradition of art music, generally conservative in style, which reveals no sense of crisis nor any strong indications of either progressivism or emulation of the master composers. Most of this is music which was not written for the concert-hall museum, so that it naturally does not show the characteristics of historicism. Some is music which still serves a social function outside of the museum: religious music, movie background music, certain kinds of school and amateur music, and so on. Another current is that of music in the service of the state, particularly totalitarian or authoritarian states such as Nazi Germany or the Soviet Union. Here, conservativism and lack of individuality are absolute virtues. However, not all conservative art music of this century belongs in this category. One purpose my redefinition of the 20th-century mainstream may serve is to provide a basis for the reexamination of the historical position and music of conservative composers throughout the century, composers whose music may reflect the temper of their age more deeply than has been assumed by writers of music history who have focussed on progressivism alone as the central current of the era. I will have more to say on this below.

The third type of music which lies outside the mainstream is the music of experimental composers. This has been called "avant-garde music," and the term is a good evocation of the way these composers see themselves and their work, as long as we remain aware of the implied contradiction: "avant garde" suggests that many others, perhaps even an army of followers, will take the path blazed by the advance guard, which has never been even remotely true for the avant gardes of the past century. Avant-gardisme has been seen as the radical wing of progressivism, and is so treated in most texts on this music, but it is really something quite different. Progressivism extends the techniques and approaches of past music, aiming to

[33]For instance, by Henry Pleasants, *The Agony of Modern Music* (London, 1955). To the extent that some jazz is treated as serious concert music, listened to attentively, quietly, and motionlessly, it has adopted some aspects of the tradition of "classical" concert music.

please an historicist audience—that is, an audience deeply familiar with the masterworks of earlier generations. The very idea of progress assumes both an historical orientation and a certain evolutionary view of history. Avant-gardisme is a rejection of the past, a rejection of the conception of the concert hall as a museum, and a call to the audience to forget their history and take part in the new. Progressive music has been successful at finding at least a small audience within the larger historicist clan, a band of converts who take great pains to explain the interconnections between the new, progressive music and the music of the masters.[34] It is not surprising that experimental music, rejecting the conception of the concert hall as a museum and virtually rejecting the historically-minded audience itself, has found no permanent place in the concert hall and is allowed entrance primarily as a curiosity.

The experimentalist stream before World War II is of relatively minor importance. It includes the Italian futurists, Varèse, some of Ives' music,[35] Henry Cowell's pieces which feature new playing techniques on the piano, John Cage, and several other "ultra-modern" composers, mostly in the Americas. However, as Robert P. Morgan has pointed out,[36] the tradition which arose in Ives and Varèse formed the headwaters of the mainstream of the second half of the century, as the avant-garde works of Boulez, Stockhausen, Cage, and many others came to dominate the scene. There is recent music written in both competing traditions, of course: George Crumb's music is as much in the historicist tradition of musical masterpieces as John Cage's work is opposed to it. The distinction to be made is not simply between the generation of Schoenberg and the generations of Cage and Rzewski. Rather, since the two streams have run along side by side for several decades, often intermingling, each composer and to a certain extent each piece has had to come to terms individually with the two competing traditions.

In a way, Rudolf Kolisch's comment that Stravinsky's neo-classical music is music about music[37] applies equally well to Schoenberg, Ives, Bartok, or Mahler, or indeed to any other composer in the historicist mainstream. Schoenberg's twelve-tone sonata forms are intelligible only as analogues to the works of Mozart and Beethoven; Ives' *Concord Sonata* makes sense only against the background of other Romantic piano sonatas; and the string quartets of Bartok, Elliott Carter, or Ralph Shapey can be heard only as extensions of or commentaries on the late quartets of Beethoven. Without knowing the specific models for these pieces, a listener can have little idea of what they are about. In each case, it is music itself which is the subject of this music; specifically, each work in the historicist main-

[34]As in Alban Berg's radio talk "What Is Atonality?", in Nicolas Slonimsky's *Music Since 1900*, 4th ed. (New York, 1971), pp. 1311-15, especially the last part of the interview.

[35]I am thinking here of pieces like *In Re Con Moto Et Al* or *Chromâtimelôdtune* rather than the *Concord Sonata*, since these are clearly experimental works, and *In Re* was composed virtually as an act of violence against the concert tradition, while the *Sonata* lies firmly in the Beethoven-Liszt piano tradition.

[36]"Rewriting Music History: Second Thoughts on Ives and Varèse," *Musical Newsletter* III:1 (January 1973), 3-12, and III:2 (April 1973), 15-23, 28.

[37]Echoed by Theodor W. Adorno, *Philosophy of Modern Music*, trans. by Anne G. Mitchell and Wesley V. Blomster (New York, 1973), p. 182.

stream is a reflection or refraction of the entire tradition and of certain pieces from it, growing from the composer's own familiarity with that tradition and depending for its comprehension on the ability of the audience to sense the musical connections being made. This is music which is inconceivable except in the context of the other works in the museum.

The subject of experimental music, by contrast, is not music of the past but music of the future. This is music about the very structure of sound, as in the works of Varèse, Cowell, and many electronic composers; this is music about ways to arrange pitch, intensity, density, and other parameters along new lines, as in the experimental works of Ives, the electronic experiments of Percy Grainger, or the work of the superserialists such as Babbitt and Boulez; this is music about the ways people think and act, like the indeterminate music of Brown and Feldman or the performance works of the 1960s; this is music about *not* being music, as in Cage's totally silent (that is, totally open) work *4'33''* or its successor, *0'00''*, which calls for the performance of any "disciplined action" *except* the playing of any piece of music. There is no connection between this music and historicism; in fact, there is a conscious disconnection, clear in the writings of Cage and Boulez among many others. While these composers seldom divorce themselves completely from their immediate predecessors, and in that sense continue the tradition of emulation and individuality, they do reject the backward-looking aspects of the music of their models.[38] The more radical, like Cage, break not only with historicism but with the tradition of Western art music as a whole. If historicist music is inconceivable outside the context of the other works in the museum, experimentalist music is inconceivable unless that context is destroyed—unless, as Cage has argued, we stop listening to masterpieces and start listening to sounds, the music all around us, with new and open ears.[39]

Experimental music poses as concert music—it is presented in concerts, and recordings are made of it—but it is not music in the Western tradition and will never find a place in the museum, excepting the very individual work of a composer such as Varèse, whose sound-masses seem still to act enough like traditional music to be acceptable as an exotic and idiosyncratic comment on the tradition. This is not to say that experimental music is not Western—it is very characteristic of our science-centered culture, and quite untypical of non-Western traditions—but rather that it is not music as that word is commonly understood. It can be thought of as an experimental branch of music theory, a proving ground for ideas of order, perception, and beauty which run counter to the received notions of the tradition. In Ives' work, for instance, his musical experiments and "stunts" remained essentially private, although he often found techniques first developed there to be useful in later, more public works; his "stunts" were not pieces of music for him so much as they were tests for what music

[38]See for instance Boulez' comments about Berg ("Present-Day Encounters with Berg," pp. 235-41) and Schoenberg ("Schoenberg Is Dead," pp. 268-76) in *Notes of an Apprenticeship*, trans. by Herbert Weinstock (New York, 1968).

[39]"Communication," *Silence* (Middletown, Connecticut, 1961), pp. 44 and 46, and elsewhere.

could do, practical contributions to an ongoing debate about musical structure and sound.[40]

Experimental music in the last forty years has become *research music,* finding its natural home in the universities in America and in government-supported research institutions in Europe—most notably, IRCAM (Institut de Recherche et de Coordination Acoustique/Musique) in Paris. Like the research of mathematicians or physicists, the research of these composers is understood by very few, mostly their own peers, and sometimes not even by them. These composers create not for the museum but for the library or laboratory. The "classic" works of research music are often referred to, as classic scientific articles are often cited, but little performed. Cage's music, for instance, is far more often talked about or written about than played, and for good reason: his thinking is far more interesting than his music, which (by and large) need never be repeated, once played. Again, the extreme unpopularity of this music should in no way be understood as a comment on its intrinsic value, viability, or musicality, any more than the work of a probabilist on martingales should be considered without value because it has no immediate application. It is extremely hard to judge this music, because so few people know anything about it; although there is much that seems dull, there is also research music of great excitement and intrinsic beauty.

VIII

This outline of the historicist mainstream, its causes, and its importance provides a new framework for understanding the music of the last hundred years. In particular, it provides an opportunity for a wholesale reevaluation of traditional emphases in concert programming, instruction, and texts. On the one hand, music which has seemed conservative, even reactionary, loses the implied stigma of cowardice and shallowness it has had to bear: the music of Rachmaninov falls into this mainstream as easily and gracefully as that of his almost exact contemporary Schoenberg, fulfilling the same roles and attempting to solve exactly the same problems of lasting value, craftsmanship, distinctive personal style, and close relationship to the classics. On the other, the distinction I have tried to make between progressive music and research music will help to sort out the works of lasting value from the curiosities and experiments: acceptance of Ives as a major composer has been hindered not only by the idiosyncrasies of his music (a characteristic he shares with all of his important contemporaries) but by the unwillingness of his sponsors to sort out the ambitious, enduring sonatas and symphonies from the fascinating and peculiar "stunts"—

[40]This is invariably the way Ives interprets his own experimental compositions, as "hardly more than memos in notes" providing "plenty of new sound experiences" which might later be incorporated into compositions intended to be works of art (*Memos,* ed. by John Kirkpatrick [New York, 1972], p. 64). He says of the *Three Quarter-tone Pieces* for two pianos that "as far as I was concerned, these pieces were not presented [at their premiere in 1925] as definitely completed works of art (or attempts at works of art). They were simply studies within the limited means we had with which to study quarter tones." (*Memos,* p. 111.) These comments should be read in the context of his frequent discussions of rule-bound theoretical approaches to music which he had encountered (*Memos,* pp. 47-50, 67, 90-91, and elsewhere), as both his writing and his musical experiments were intended as responses to those approaches.

technical tours de force which have earned Ives a certain reputation as an innovator but are ultimately trivial in evaluating his real achievement as a composer. Accepting the fact that all concerts in the art tradition now have the character of living museums, even when the music is very new, may also spur promoters of contemporary music to seek the establishment of "museums" of their own: major orchestras, ensembles, and concert halls designed specifically to display modern music, in analogy with museums of modern art. There are already contemporary chamber groups all across the country; what is needed is a realization that the great city orchestras of Europe and America are never going to pursue modern music enthusiastically, that that is not in fact their function (and, in the case of American orchestras, never was their function), and that if new orchestral works are to be showcased (and well rehearsed), they must find a permanent home of their own instead of begging crumbs from established orchestras.

Yet, because historicism has been equated with academism or reaction—largely through a misapprehension of the historicist significance of progressivism—it may seem that to label the music of the last five generations "historicist" is to belittle the music of an entire century. I do not think this is the case. I have argued that emulation and progressivism are two sides of the same coin. The greatest composers of the 18th and 19th centuries emulated their greatest predecessors, and this emulation spurred their most forward-looking music. The historicist composers of our century have faced one principal problem in writing for the museum: creating works which show classical craftsmanship and a distinct musical personality. In solving this problem, the greatest composers of our century have emulated their own greatest predecessors, and have created music which matches their models in quality and personality. Simply describing the goals composers have set for themselves and why they saw those goals as paramount, as I have tried to do here, does not belittle their aspirations.

The word "museum" derives from the Greek *mouseion,* "a temple of the Muses, hence, in [Late Greek], an establishment recording and propagating the cultivation, by the people, of the arts and sciences," according to Eric Partridge's *Origins;*[41] the *Shorter Oxford English Dictionary* defines a "museum" as "a building or apartment dedicated to the pursuit of learning or the arts; a study; a library" or as "a building used for storing and exhibiting objects illustrative of antiquities, natural history, art, etc."[42] Without question, the Western concert hall fits these definitions. The word "music" likewise stems from the concept of the Muses, deriving from the Greek *mousiké,* "of a Muse or the Muses, concerning the arts, poetry, literature."[43] Music belongs in the museum, in the study, in the library, where it can be pursued as a kind of learning and a kind of art. It is beautiful that music is there, that it has survived. We value music more highly in the museum than did its first audience; we see Bach, Mozart, and Brahms

[41]*Origins: A Short Etymological Dictionary of Modern English,* 4th ed. (London, 1966), p. 421.

[42]C. T. Onions, ed., et al., *The Shorter Oxford English Dictionary on Historical Principles,* 3rd corrected ed. (Oxford, 1980), p. 1375.

[43]*Shorter Oxford English Dictionary,* p. 1375.

as part of our culture, a part of the past but one we wish to continue, to study, to enrich. As music analysts, critics, and historians enrich our understanding of the past in obvious ways, new compositions enrich our tradition both by adding to it and by commenting on it or reinterpreting it. The intense seriousness with which we take our past masterpieces has made it possible for living composers to write works which encompass and transcend all of the tradition.

Musical value is not determined by popularity alone, and this is particularly true for museum pieces. While music for public occasions, or music which is designed to be performed only once or a few times, must have instant and wide appeal, works in the art music tradition need only find a small but devoted audience and cadre of performers to earn a place in the permanent collection, and the intensity of their devotion matters even more than their numbers. There are works in this century—Berg's *Wozzeck,* Ives' sonatas, Schoenberg's *Erwartung,* Stravinsky's *Rite of Spring,* Bartok's *Music for Strings, Percussion and Celesta,* Britten's *War Requiem,* Berio's *Sinfonia,* George Crumb's *Ancient Voices of Children,* to name just a few—which rival any music ever composed with regard to craftsmanship, compelling personality, and sense of "truth" or "inspiration." These pieces will be performed for a long time, and, as occasional performances of minor works by major composers and major works by minor composers are in constant demand for the sake of variety, they will bring along with them into the concert hall the music of the entire century. The music of the historicist tradition, the first to be written for a musical museum, has won a secure place within its walls.[44]

Dedicated to my friend Joseph Straus

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[44]The ideas in this paper grew in part from seeds planted by three of my teachers: Ralph Shapey's frequent reference in composition class to the weight of the classical tradition; Rose Rosengard Subotnik's analysis of the enduring influence of Beethoven on later 19th-century composers, based in part on Harold Bloom's *The Anxiety of Influence: A Theory of Poetry* (Oxford and New York, 1973) as applied to music history; and Bruno Nettl's discussion of the place of Persian classical music in Persian society, which encouraged me to take an "ethnomusicological" view of contemporary Western classical music as well. The idea of the modern concert hall as a "museum" is of course common property; my principal aim has been to offer a new interpretation of its importance for music written in the last hundred years.

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