When entering this class, I came with expectations that I already had a good appreciation for music. I am very familiar with a variety of music and play multiple instruments myself. However, there is a difference between simply listening to music and fully appreciating it in all its glory. This first lesson focused on distinguishing between the two. That was what I found most interesting in what I have read so far. This fact allows for one to appreciate music whether it suits their tastes or not. While you may not enjoy classical music, you can earn a respect for its complex composition and innate intelligence through appreciating the time and brilliance associated with its style. In some cases, finding this respect leads one to even begin to enjoy music they did not previously like. This is something that I have even experienced in my own life. Due to my own interest in playing guitar, I tend to favor artists who I can relate to through talented efforts on the guitar. Understanding the time and skill required to master difficult riffs, I have gained a high respect for such musicians and are drawn to their productions. This is typical for all musicians. They enjoy listening to songs that are similar to the kind of sounds they produce.

The lecture made another point that I found particularly intriguing. “Music does not progress, it is not ‘getting better.’ It is changing.” This is one of the true beauties that lie within music, and is not found hardly anywhere else in life. Naturally as humans, we want to push everything further; technology, science, philosophy, etc. is all seeking to get more advance and progressive. The goal or purpose of music is not to “get better,” but to simply express the thoughts, emotions, feelings, struggles, etc. of the people living during the time of production. The quality of instruments and resources to produce music may become better, but ultimately, all music is matching the mood the generation it was written. Thus, as the generation changes, and history takes its course, the music will change with time.

After listening to Britton’s orchestra, one can really understand the position described earlier about music appreciation. Had I listened to the music on the radio randomly in the car, without any explanation of the details, I may have turned the channel. Without realizing the complex inner-workings of this masterpiece, it is difficult to fully appreciate this style music (especially when our generation prefers rap, hip-hop, and R&B to classical music). As the interactive player walked me through the different aspects of the composition, I could really pick out the different characteristics and recognized the brilliance required to put it all together. Hearing the different instruments that were necessary to create this piece astounds me. Britton weaves brass, woodwinds, and percussions together seamlessly. There are even peculiar instruments present, like Chinese block, triangle, tambourine, xylophone, whip, and gong! Though I am not a composer, it is still fair of me to say that the composer is beyond talented. He is a musical genius. This takes me to the second point I raised: music is changing, not progressing. Personally, I do not think music today is comparable to this classical work. The artists we hear on the radio everyday do not show the complexity found in Britton’s music. Instead, music was shaped to fit this generation where music relies on vocals and harsh beats. Neither of these styles can be called more progressive or better than the other. They are simply different.