

Listening Log – Politics

Peter Rauscher

"I pledge my honor that I have abided by the Stevens Honor System."

Intro

The track I chose from this week's playlist - "Worker's Union" – was written by Dutch composer Louis Andriessen, and first performed in 1975. Interestingly, the piece is scored for any group of instruments that can achieve a loud and intense sound, so performers are open to choosing what instruments they would like to perform with.

Description

As I listened to the track, I noticed an increasing sense of urgency and tension, created by the insistent pulse of the music coupled with the relentless waveform. The amplitude and frequency of the music gradually increase as the piece progresses, heightening the sense of energy and excitement. The chaos created by the interplay between the instruments and the rhythmic patterns they create are reflective of the struggle for workers' rights and the fight against capitalist oppression. The repetitive nature of the song, along with its sheer length, could be interpreted as a metaphor for the never-ending cycle of labor and exploitation in capitalist societies. Lastly, the cohesion between the instruments can be seen as a symbol of the collectivist sentiment found in workers who constantly battle against exploitative employers.

Experience

Personally, as someone who's read a lot of Socialist and Marxist theory, I found the piece to be both thought-provoking and empowering. I was struck by the way that the composition encapsulated the struggle against capitalist oppression, and the relentless depressive emotion that can come from exploitative wage labor. I appreciated the way that Andriessen used music to explore political themes without using outright lyrical expression.