

Listening Log – The Body

Peter Rauscher

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

Intro

The orchestral piece "Flight of the Bumblebee" was composed by Nikolai Rimsky-Korsakov at the end of the 19th century as an interlude to his opera, "The Tale of Tsar Sultan". This particular recording was performed by the Gewandhausorchester Leipzig orchestra and was conducted by Gerhard Wiesenhutter.

Description

The piece is incredibly fast-paced, intricate, and complex, and certainly requires a tremendous amount of concentration and skill from the performers. The breakneck pace of the notes create a humming or buzzing sound in the ear that quite literally mimics the sound of an imperceptible wing flap from a bee. **The sound inspired me, personally, as it does with nearly every rendition of this song I hear, to rapidly sway my head back and forth in a snaking motion, trying to match the rhythm of the violin. I also began tapping my foot, and generally becoming fidgety within my seat, as if I had something important on my mind, or somewhere to be. I also noticed a perceptible rise in my own heartrate, as though I could hear it beating in my own chest. As for the performers, they exercised a remarkable amount of precision and coordination in physical command of their instruments, particularly in terms of their hand movement and finger placement. The speed of the song requires tremendous accuracy as well as agility. The violinist especially used both precision and speed in creating the "buzzing" sound we hear throughout the piece, using a technique called "tremolo" involving oscillating the bow over the strings in as small an interval as possible.**

Experience

Though I've heard it many times performed by many different groups, this piece always stuck out to me as unique each time. Not only does the piece itself inspire me with energy and haste each time I hear it, but with the demanding nature of the song I feel as though each performer has a way of making the piece their own. I really enjoy songs that I can listen to time and time again and appreciate new things out of each time, particularly when a song is able to be covered in so many unique and interesting ways.