**What are you about to say?**

**How many times have you found yourself going to see opera, symphony or concerto but 15 seconds into the music you catch yourself thinking about your cat or something similarly irresistible? As you try to regain your focus, you look around and sure enough there is somebody looking at the ceiling or reaching out for some candy. The noise from the crumpled candy wrapper is now the joy of the moment. No worries, we’ve all been there!**

**Now, this usually doesn’t happen when we go to the movies though, so why is that? Sure, movies can be way more entertaining than a Mozart Concerto (as incredible as these may be). But still, there must be something we are missing here. Have you ever asked yourself: what am I actually listening to? Let’s use Beethoven’s famous 5th Symphony as an example. What are we supposed to follow here? Is it a melody? If so, which one? Is it the theme? Or is it some mysterious back story about what the composer was thinking when he imagined those notes? If that’s it, then we probably don’t need the music. Let’s just read the back story! No, I don’t think so. Are we expected to create a mental representation from the sounds we hear then? I am not sure either. This isn’t a simple question and that is why so many of us curse the idea of going back into a concert hall.**

* **That opera went on for almost 4 hours! God, never again…**

**Let’s dive into something much more tangible than mental pictures, feelings or back stories. When we listen to classical music there is a story being told, we just need to learn how that works. Music and literature work in similar ways. Both are composed by words that form sentences; sentences that form paragraphs; they both convey ideas and feelings through different layers of communication.**

**Just by understanding those layers, we might find that music isn’t so mysterious after all. We may then leave behind us some common misconceptions and our perception that classical music is (sometimes) boring. Beautiful. But boring.**

**Musical speech can be roughly divided into three layers: 1) tension-resolution; 2) harmony (the grammar of music); 3) form. Each layer builds on top of the previous one, adding complexity to the composition. Let’s start with the first one.**

**Tension-resolution**

**The idea here is a very basic, almost an instinctive one. This is how we perceive nature and the world around us. We can think about tension like this: throw a ball into the air. It will accumulate tension as it goes up until it will eventually stop and gradually make its way back down. The way up created tension, the way down gave it the resolution. Music is build upon this very concept, with constant movements to and fro. Some intervals (more on intervals [here]) can create tension (dissonances), while others will resolve it (consonances), but we are focused on more abstract expressions of this idea. Here are some examples of great tension being built and then resolved, creating extraordinary moments in their pieces (I still get goose bumps each time I hear them):**

**[EXAMPLES]**

**Why is it important?**

**How can it be done?**

**Conclusion**