

## **MUSIC APPRECIATION 1: MUSICAL TASTE**

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Why do some people love the music of Beethoven and hate the music of Stravinsky?

Why do some people love pop music and hate classical music saying, among other things, that classical music is so old fashioned?

However, there are young people who complain that a pop song that is a year old is old-fashioned!

Why do people love pop songs which are short and often repetitive, and yet they cannot admire a concert pianist playing a difficult 45 minute concerto and from memory?

It is said to be a matter of taste, but I do not like that definition. Taste can mean a liking for something but it also means the ability to appreciate what is both beautiful and excellent. And so, if someone enjoys very loud and noisy pop music they could be said to have taste. But taste has an aesthetic value, and what is tasteless does not.

Of course, everyone has the right to like what they choose to like, and to ignore the sort of music that does not appeal to them.

The word taste is best rendered preference.

But it still does not answer the question, Why do some people enjoy Elton John and others adore Mozart?

It may have to do with education. Years ago, music was taught in schools which included details of the lives of great composers, listening to their music and taking part in singing or in the school orchestra. Of course, this was before pop music, when a large percentage of school children learned to play a musical instrument and there were regular school concerts. There was a resultant sense of achievement.

In those days, many children were encouraged by their parents to have private music lessons which developed children's social skills, confidence and installing a real sense of purpose.

These situations do not generally apply today. Children are brought up on pop music, sedentary pursuits such as sitting in front of a computer. Seldom are they encouraged to listen to any other type of music.

The second issue is that pop music does not require any intellectual or intelligent response. It is superficial because it is not thorough, it is not painstakingly careful and not great in extent or degree. It lacks emotional or serious depth. It is not academic or profound and it could be safely argued that it may not have any real or lasting beauty although some pop songs of the 1950s and 1960s did have some good tunes. And pop music is rarely original. There is very little difference between the majority of pop songs. In fact, it could be said that this type of music is usually predictable and, as many musicologists point out, what is predictable music is not good music.

But similar observations can be made about some classical composers. Many professional musicians complain that Chopin's music is all much of a muchness and is predictable. Others have said that almost everything that Elgar wrote is predictable. A lot of Mozart sounds the same and so on.

Incidentally, Chopin was not a classical composer but a romantic composer. There are many periods of 'serious' music, renaissance, restoration, baroque, classical, namely the times of Haydn to Beethoven, the romantics, the impressionists and the contemporary. But, for this article all these periods will be deemed classical.

Musical taste may be a cultural thing. For example, jazz originated in the brothels of New Orleans. Rock

'n' roll originated in the ghettos of New York and the term rock 'n roll refers to bodily movements during illicit sex, whereas classical music has its origins in ceremonial and church music. And so classical music is far more moral than both jazz and rock 'n roll and other pop music. Classical music is 'clean', free from impurities and immorality and, therefore, morally sound and without objectionable language, is skilful and streamlined in presentation although some modern operas such as Ligeti's *Le Grand Macabre* or Berg's *Lulu* may offend some.

Less than a decade after the birth of rock n' roll, came new fashion such as the mini skirt and an consequent and resultant epidemic in unplanned teenage pregnancies. There was a new freedom and promiscuity and an even more violent reaction against morality and decency. Parents and older people were old fashioned and out of touch, and some of them liked classical music!

A madness set in among young girls and teenage girls. They idolised boys in pop and rock bands to the extent of hysteria. They fought for tickets to be in the front row of a pop concert and wore their mini skirts and during the performance would take down their knickers and throw them on the stage hoping the boy of their dreams would pick the underwear up and keep them and perhaps might met up with the girls after the show.

Some girls actually smuggled themselves into the dressing room of pop stars and enjoyed sex with them.

Pop and rock music was and, in the main, is deliberately sexy and often immoral. The Rolling Stones sang that they could get no satisfaction as their girl was having her period and could not have sex. The Beatles sang, "Boy, your naughty girl has got her knickers down!" Not only were pop groups encouraging illicit sex but drug taking. The Beatles song *Lucy in the Sky with Diamonds*, which title makes no sense until you take the first letter of each noun with spells LSD, an illegal hallucinogenic drug. Another group shovelled white powder over the audience claiming it was heroin. The Sex Pistols were outrageous and anarchistic.

Teenagers, particularly girls, were immersed in much of this. Free sex was the order of the day and the famous slogan was, "Make love, not war." However, boys and men were also transfixed by beautiful young women singers who inflamed their lust.

Some young people eventually got wise to using condoms and the Pill. This only encouraged more sex.

And so is music reflective of the times we live in? If morals are slipping is it related to the decline in morality in pop music, young peoples music and in society generally?

But it is no only young people of today. Mozart was sexually perverse. He wrote a series of canons to his own vulgar words which encouraged the licking of people's bottoms. Schubert was a frequenter of brothels and paid for these services. He was so unattractive that it was the only way he could have sex. He died of syphilis and it served him right. Elgar was bisexual and was regularly with other men's wives and he had a fetish that all women who sang in the choir or orchestra when performing his music had to wear navy blue knickers and he often made inspections. Benjamin Britten was a paedophile having sex with many underage boys and was a criminal. We cannot therefore say that only pop groups of today are immoral.

There are many classical composers who, by comparison lived exemplary lives such as Haydn, Dvorak and Bruckner.

Many pop songs are so poor that they only use three chords, dominant, sub-dominant and tonic. Yet Schubert often did the same thing!

When Jimi Handrix came to the Isle of Wight Pop Festival, I was there. He told all the young women to lift their skirts in front of him so he could see their underwear. He voted one girl who wore yellow underwear the most foxy lady. He actually said that his music was sex.

Some pop stars have been found guilty of murder. The obvious case is that of a member of the Sex Pistols, and yet there was a composer called Gesualdo who murdered his unfaithful wife, her lover and their child.

Another appeal of pop and rock music is the lyrics which are often love songs which have a special appeal particularly to hormonal girls each of whom believed that the singer was singing only to her and, as a result, she would become even more hysterical. I had a singing student in the 1990s who told me that many years ago she sat in the front row of a concert and took off her knickers and threw them at Paul McCartney on the stage believing he sang his love song especially for her. She continued to sit in the front row of that concert with her skirt round her waist and no underwear on. Is this not madness? But Alison was one of thousands of girls who behaved like this. It must be hysteria and that is a mental condition marked by emotional outbursts sometimes with symptoms such as paralysis and any uncontrolled state of excitement, panic or anger. One does not like to use the term madness, but this is just that. Some of the accepted definitions of madness is extremely foolish, senseless, irrational, extremely excited and out of control.

I wonder if their parents knew what they were doing and that their daughters came home without their underwear.

I am not aware of anything like this ever happening at a symphony concert or a piano recital. Classical music results in better behaviour. Why?

There is another sense in which classical music is superior. Compare the singer Shirley Bassey with Joan Sutherland. Bassey may be a great entertainer but she could not sing the extensive and demanding opera roles that Sutherland does so well. Sutherland's voice is miles better than Bassey and her technique and skill are exemplary. There is no doubt that Sutherland is so magnificent that Bassey cannot compare with her, marvellous entertainer though she probably is.

And so far, we have said that our musical preferences may be based on education or the lack of it, that pop and rock music is superficial and lacks any aesthetic, and that pop music often depends on handsome young men, pretty girls, sex, drugs and freedom to be rebels.

In more recent years pop music has become more raunchy with girl singers in revealing clothes and showing their underwear and some male singers clutching their private parts through their trousers. It is not so much about music but about sex. Ali G sang about Julie and his googlies. Pop magazines for teenage girls encourage them to have sex explaining that it is their bodies and they can do what they like with them. Such magazines tell girls to wear even skimpier bikinis and shorter skirts as this is confidence building. There is advice on the most daring underwear to buy and accounts of the sexual exploits of pop and movie stars. The new recordings of recommended pop songs are often sexually explicit. The Cheeky Girls had a song Touch my bum and a few songs use the f word. Some songs say that we want to spend the night together and make love till the morning light.

You don't go to a symphony concert and see the women in the orchestra in mini skirts or the conductor holding his private parts through his trousers.

Serious music is not crude but generally elegant

But there are people who gush about music and performers and, if you disagree with them, there is friction. There are many women of a certain age who admire the blind Italian tenor, Andreas Bocelli. That he is blind is tragic but he is not a great singer by any means. His voice is often nasal and reedy and he is regularly out of tune, but when you prove this to his fans, the fur flies.

Elton John is a song writer, singer and pianist. His singing is completely off and usually has shouting, bawling and other excruciating sounds. A sign of a bad pianist is one who taps his foot on the floor. People respond to these observations by saying that he has made a lot of money from his performances, but that

does not make him a good singer or a good pianist. He is regularly out of tune. His dress sense and foul language does not enhance any reputation he may have.

People may protest and say that we must only judge the music not the lifestyle of the performers. But, as we have seen, the two issues are cemented together. However, the protest does carry some weight. Wagner hated the Jews, but not as much as Chopin did, and was a political activist and regularly tried to escape paying his just bills. He was horrid man but some of his music is superlative and even admired by those who say that they do not like classical music. For all of Britten's sexual abuse of boys there are those who regard some of his music highly.

It is difficult, if not impossible, to divorce the life of the musician from his lifestyle.

There is also the problem of being guilty by association. If I were to say that I liked Britten some would take it that I approved of his lifestyle and might even think that I am a paedophile myself.

Dancing often accompanies pop and rock music and even in the early days, dance was risqué. Even though the girls wore longish skirts in the 1940s they were tossed over the boys back or shoulders showing their underwear in a dance called the jitterbug. And what is seen stimulates desire and, as a result, some of these girls were raped or began a sexual relationship usually when they were not ready for it and neither was the boy.

Indeed, the men were as bad. Elvis Presley was known as Elvis the Pelvis because he regularly thrust the lower part of his body stimulating the male part in sexual intercourse. There was the song about the teeny weeny yellow polka dot bikini. Recently there have been songs encouraging us to shake our ass and others whose words are too explicit to repeat here. One song is about a beautiful teenage girl's pubic hair referred to as the kitty in the middle.

A young girl in my class one day was singing some very rude song. I am not sure she understood what it really meant. When I asked about it she said it was the latest single by a well-known pop group. If she sang it in front of boys they might take up her offer in the song.

It is true to say that pop and rock music is more to do with sex than music and, as it is not primarily about music, is it really music at all?

Yes, it is because, it uses basic musical features.

Another concern is the bastardisation of language in pop music such as "I wanna hold yer hand" and, "Baby, baby, baby, I gotta a lot of luv to give".

One song says, "I am goin' luv my baby all night long and make her squeal with delight and run my hands all over her body". Is this between nappy changes?

When presenting all these facts and concerns the usual response is, "Weren't you young once?"

Others complain that I am taking things too literally and that words change their meaning with modern usage. But to avoid confusion, words are best used in their correct and original meaning.

The reply, "Weren't you young once?" does not address or answer the question but turns a blind eye to these issues.

People will complain that I am a moralist and that I do not like certain composers because of their lifestyle. That is not true. I did not like the music of Schubert long before I knew about his life and the same can be said of Elgar and Britten. When I did eventually find out about their respective lives I admit that I disliked them even more but, long before those revelations, I had already decided what I felt about their music.

To indicate my fairness and, as already stated, Wagner was not a decent man but that does not prevent me admiring much of his music some of which I would never wish to be without.

But the question still remains. Why do some people like Robbie Williams and others dislike him intensely? Why do some people like most of the songs of a pop group but positively dislike others? Why do I admire Mozart's Symphony no. 34 but am put off by his Symphony no. 40? Why is it that many concert pianists who play Schumann refuse to play his work Carnival Op 9? Why is it that many distinguished musicians literally feel genuinely physically sick when they hear anything by Elgar? Why is it that when I first heard Bizet's Symphony in C, I loved it, but now cannot stand it? Why is it that the Pop group The Zutons, who are very original, are not more well-known?

It has to do with many things. For example I find a lot of Chopin's music to be effeminate with its prettiness and tinkling at the top of the piano. I am a red-blooded male and believe that men and their work should be masculine. There are people that say that men have a feminine side particularly when they show sensitivity but sensitivity is not the exclusive preserve of women

This nonsense of men having a feminine side was largely advocated by feminists who also said that men have a menopause and that PMT was always man's fault. These statements were made by women including psychologists in a BBC documentary and elsewhere. These women said that the feminine side was the caring and loving side and if men were caring, loving and sensitive it was because of their feminine side. In other words these attributes and virtues are not masculine but exclusively feminine and, therefore, only the female sex care, love and are sensitive.

That is nonsense and brain surgeons have said so, including such experts as Dr Mackenzie and Dr Darling.

Incidentally I have not had the menopause!

There has to be a valid reason for one's likes and dislikes. People talk about our musical tastes being subjective, that is to say based on our emotions and prejudices. But prejudice must not come into it. Emotions do and so does the appeal of a piece at a particular event in our lives.

I survived a cancer operation in 1966. The first piece of music I heard thereafter was Rubbra's Soliloquy for cello and small orchestra. I loved it and still do but I cannot say it is a masterpiece. It will always be special to me because of its association.

There are shallow people who love certain pieces of music out of a sense of loyalty to someone. I know someone who was befriended by the composer Lennox Berkeley and, therefore, will not have anything said against that composer or any of his music. Some of his work is quite superb but not all of it is. The Symphony no. 4 was written when he was ill and it is poor and technically very weak. That is understandable, but to argue that it is a fine work is both untrue and pointless and to disallow anything said against his music is gagging the truth.

One of my students met a pop star and she immediately fell in love with him. She was 13. She made up her mind to buy all his CDs and said that she loved all of his songs. Years later she admitted she did not really like any of his songs at any time. It was the thrill of meeting him that impressed her, not his music.

Young men, and men not so young, enjoy the group Girls Aloud. They are five very attractive young women often dressed in very short skirts. The men love them because they are sexy and desirable. They collect photographs of them and belong to their fan club. But it is primarily their sexuality that is the attraction, not the music.

And teenage girls, and girls even younger, like them and dress like them and emulate them. You see nine and ten year old girls walking about dressed in the style of Girls Aloud and trying to be sexy. That is a dangerous

pursuit and may explain why some such girls are sexually assaulted.

Another curious fact is that later in life some devotees of pop music are converted to classical music. It works the other way round as well. People who have adored classical music for years suddenly are caught up with pop music.

It is true that most of us develop and therefore our musical taste changes.

But to return to Schubert. What valid reason do I have for not liking his music?

He would write a tune, repeat it over and over, and then leave a hundred bars or more empty, then resume with the tune over and over again, leave more bars empty and then the tune again many times, and repeat this process. Then he would fill in the extensive gaps with scales, broken chords and arpeggios. His late piano sonatas are too long and in one movement of one of his sonatas there is five minutes of arpeggios, scales and broken chords, all very tedious and boring. This is awful construction. It is like a builder erecting a three storey house made of stone and wanting to leave the second storey until the end when the roof and top storey were already built! In many of Schubert's songs the piano accompaniments are mere vamping with perhaps with only three chords. All his stage works were disastrous flops!

These are facts and prove that Schubert was not a great composer and not even a good one!

But some people will not accept proven facts!

There is some music I do not like for the valid reason that it is anaemic, pale and lacking energy and often having no real content. Music that is just atmosphere is suitable for films but not for the concert hall or a CD. This is music in which little or nothing happens. It is non-event music. I would hate to listen to two hours of Scriabin's piano music for this very reason. For me, music must always be vital, alive, contrasted and full of sustaining interest.

Of course, we must avoid the influence of others. The Piano Concerto of Scriabin is highly disliked by many concert pianists and for valid musical reason. If people like this concerto they have every right to like it and must not be diminished for liking it. But equally they have no right to influence or persuade us to like it.

An editor of a music journal who cannot even read music, and would not know a semibreve if he sat on one, has written that Joseph Holbrooke's Piano Concerto no. 1 is the greatest piano concerto ever written. It certainly is not and it is full of musical errors and serious flaws.

This is the editor who said that Dvorak was influenced by Britten!

BBC announcers make personal comments about music which are often false, damaging and perhaps, influential. An announcer introduced the Symphony no. 41 by Haydn conducted by Trevor Pinnock and said it was certainly not the best performance of this symphony. Another announcer referred to Elgar's masterly writing for the piano which is laughable because it is untrue. The editor of that musical journal reviewed a recording of Paul Creston's Symphony no. 2 stating that the performance was as exactly as the composer wrote it. It was not. This recording missed out the vital piano part

There may be a danger that this article will prove influential but that is not my intention. I am not going to launch a crusade about a composer I admire who is neglected and try to convert you to like him and his music.

A man who writes regularly about British music including sleeve notes for CDs seems to be regarded, and may think that he is the expert on British music. No one is. His articles contain grave errors and only serve to promote himself and his views are highly prejudicial.

Another writer on music who has written books about Richard Strauss, Elgar and Walton is sorely inaccurate. For example, in his book on Walton, he does not mention that Walton studied with Humphrey Searle for two years. This is vital information missed by this inadequate writer. A friend wrote to him pointing out on five pages of A4 on errors in one of his books with evidence to prove his points. The writer's reply was savage and included returning my friends notes torn up into hundreds of little bits.

There is a lot of trite and trivial so called classical music such as the waltzes of the Strauss family. We have already commented that predictable music is not good music and, as it is superficial, nothing more need be said about the Strauss family! I have heard it said that Johann Strauss II is a great composer. That is an insult to the real great composers like Bach, Haydn and Beethoven. Strauss never wrote a symphony, concerto or string quartet but waltz after waltz after waltz after waltz and polkas.

The composer Richard Strauss is not related to the Strauss waltz family.

But there is good light music. The songs of Eric Coates are real gems beautifully and technically well written and with good piano accompaniments. The miniatures of Albert Ketelby have some good tunes, splendid orchestration and a fine emotional content. These are but two examples.

Some people who like classical music do not like early music such as that by Corelli, Handel and Telemann because it is predictable. Stravinsky said that once you had heard one concerto by Vivaldi you had heard all his 600 concertos.

There are those who do not like modern classical music. The reasons are feeble. They don't understand or want to understand it and assert that music without lovely tunes and usual harmonies is not music at all!

Other state that if music is good you should not have any problem understanding it. But music must not stay in a rut but develop!

The worst comment is when people say, "I know what I like and that is all that matters!"

That is ridiculous and limiting. I was 62 when I discovered the marvellous operas of Bellini. For forty years I was not particularly interested in opera. What a fool I was!

Radio stations who play classical music are selective in what they broadcast and therefore they are, in effect, telling us what is worth listening to and what is not worth listening to! That must be prejudice which is defined and unfair and unreasonable.

Recently in a period of twelve months the BBC broadcast Elgar's Cello Concerto 30 times, once three times in a period of twenty four hours. Another Cello Concerto, the glorious B minor concerto of Dvorak, was broadcast three times in the same period of twelve months.

What the BBC was doing was saying, in effect, that the Elgar was ten times better than the Dvorak. The BBC were telling us that the Elgar was worth hearing and that it was a superior work. We were being influenced and indoctrinated. The BBC said that it was broadcast so often because cellists wanted to play it but twenty three broadcasts were from CDs and four of them was the same recording by Jacqueline Du Pre

If a work is broadcast so often it creates the impression that the work is a great work!

And if a work of another composer is never or seldom broadcast it creates the impression that it is not worthy of broadcast because it is not good music.

Beecham said, "I would rather read a list of Elgar's music than listen to any of it!"

This raises the problem of Elgar. He is the only composer to have a depreciation society, an official and honourable organisation with essays proving the inadequacy and flaws in Elgar's music. In a survey in 2000 the two works most disliked by music lovers and professional musicians were Elgar's Symphony no. 2 and Mahler's Symphony no. 4. Sir Adrian Boult conducted Elgar regularly which gave the impression that he liked Elgar's music. He did not. He is on record as saying, "If Elgar's music is played badly, you blame the orchestra; if it is played well, you blame Elgar!"

This leads us to the main thrust of our investigation into musical taste. It has a lot to do with our emotions which emotions arise out of our experiences and the experiences of those close to us.

The first time I kissed a girl she introduced me to Tschaikovsky's Romeo and Juliet and, as a result, that works means something to me. But that is because of the event and not the quality of the music..

But the first girl I loved was a singer and the songs I heard her sing and, for which I accompanied her, are very important to me. I liked those songs because I loved her. It is the experience more than the music.

By nature I am an organised person and I admire music that is organised rather than music that stops and starts and keep changing tempi. If you are going to write an allegro then the whole movement should be an allegro which word means merry, quick and lively. Elgar headed up movements allegro but they are not allegros at all. Haydn wrote allegros!.

Another problem is the attempt to amalgamate classical music with non-classical music. Hayley Westenra is a fine singer of easy listening songs and she has won classical awards and yet she is not a classical singer. Katharine Jenkins has been called an opera star but she is not. She sings a variety of songs of which a few are classical but usually arrangements. She is called a classical singer but she is not. Neither Hayley or Katharine have had roles in opera or regularly sing Schubert, Mahler and Richard Strauss.

Pavarotti has sung duets and performed with Celine Dion, Bono, Eric Clapton and Elton John. Pavarotti was a poor actor in opera but a good singer. The same cannot be said of these other performers although they may be good entertainers and popular.

The composer and scholar Wilfrid Mellers equated The Beatles with Bach and with classical composers and gave many lectures on The Beatles and their music. Bach was a genius, even if you do not appreciate his music, and many of his works are masterpieces vastly superior to anything that The Beatles wrote. Could The Beatles write something like B minor Mass, the St Matthew Passion, the magnificent organ works and the sublime Violin Concertos?

Of course not.

We have already said that in the pop world people will like the performer in a physical or emotional way and collect their recordings but the music is secondary to the sexual appeal of the performer. It happens in classical music as well. Some believe that the young violinist Nicola Bendetti is glamorous and will buy her CDs irrespective of what she is playing. Some women buy the CDs of Andrea Bocelli for non-musical reasons.

I was one of several adjudicators in a cello competition. The girl who should have won was 20 stone and had skin blemishes on her face but she was the best player. But the other adjudicators said she lacked image and marketing potential and gave the award to a pretty girl because she had nice legs.

Our appreciation of music may also be governed by our beliefs and other non-musical interests. Our beliefs may lead us to like church and sacred music. If we are atheist or agnostic we may deliberately choose not to like this type of music and that may be prejudice. If we are politically left-wing we may like Communism inherent in the music of Alan Bush. If we are homosexual we may like and support the music of homosexual

composers like Lully, Tchaikovsky, Ravel and Britten because we feel we must stand up for gay rights.

If we like trains we may consequently admire works by Honegger and Villa-Lobos since we love everything about the railways. If we are fans of Middlesborough football club we may be interested in David Golightly's Symphony no. 1. If we like to dance the waltz, we could be drawn to the Strauss waltz composers but these interests do not make the associated music good music. People who find performers sexually attractive is no evidence that all the music they play is of quality.

I find bestiality offensive. Britten's work *Our Hunting Fathers* is politely described as man's relationship with animals. While Britten was not the author of the text, he chose to set the texts and some of the awful sounds the singer has to make represent the ecstasy and orgasm of having sex with an animal. Britten was obviously attracted to this subject and actually told us that this was the true interpretation of his setting and this must not affect our judgment if we find this subject offensive, which it is. However, from a neutral and musical point of view the work is technically flawed and often very poor in content. I did not like the piece before the composer explained its message.

But there is another aspect which has to do with culture and other cultures. For example, I cannot get on with Indian music because the sounds are so different from western culture and the instruments are not that familiar to me.

I realise that this article could be taken as another personal attack on composers such as Schubert, Elgar and Britten but that is not the intention, nor is it my intention to pass judgement on their dissolute life styles. I refer to them because they exemplify vital parts of the subject and they serve as appropriate examples. It will be asserted that a man's life is his private business and, when it comes to composers, we are to assess the music not the man. It is also true that I am fond of the music of some composers whose life styles could be questionable.

But with any creative artist their style of life is often inherent in their work. Agatha Christie always writes whodunits. It was a subject that fascinated her and took over her life. Zane Grey wrote Westerns because he knew the Wild West and it fascinated him and was part of his life. He also hated the practices of the Mormons and in some of his novels he made Mormons to be villains. Richard Dawkins is an atheist and his books and talks always reveal his beliefs. His life style is atheistic and it shows in his work. Doris Stokes was a medium and that was her life style and her books advocate this branch of spiritualism. Elgar was a very arrogant and pompous man who would say that if anyone wrote a letter addressed simply to Elgar, England, it would reach him. His life style is in his music. The composer Messaien was fascinated by bird song and it was a major part of his life and bird song is produced in much of his music. The word spiritual is misused, or has many meanings, but Bruckner was a devout Catholic and his music is spiritual. Bach was a Lutheran and much of his music was written for the church which played a vital part in his life. Britten was a pederast and it shows in much of his music particularly *Death in Venice*. He was also interested in bestiality as shown in *Our Hunting Fathers*. I do not want homosexuality, pederasty and bestiality rammed down my throat. Many pop groups are promiscuous and take drugs and their life style is sometimes shown in their music and is a bad example to shallow people who like them and emulate them. There is a famous lady author who writes novels about sex and perversions and has admitted that her writings are based on her personal experiences. Her work reveals her life style and what type of person she is. Dr F A Tatford was a brilliant scientist and would say that he did not believe in evolution because he was a scientist. His books reveal that. A J P Taylor spent his life studying history. That was his life and his excellent books are about history.

The life style of the artist is in his/her work. You cannot divorce the two.

But the valid argument remains. Primarily, we must judge the quality, or lack of it, in someone's work. I have already explained that Schubert as a poor composer and provided the evidence which you can check for yourself. You can consult *British Composers in Interview* by R Murray Schafer published by Faber as one example. Some people who have will not accept the facts but state, "I don't care about the evidence. I like

Schubert and that's that!" So be it, but to call Schubert a great composer is erroneous and we must not perpetuate untruths. He is a famous composer but not a good one. Being famous does not mean being great and honourable or an outstanding artist..

I have made the comparison about the BBC saturating us with some works at the expense of other works in the same genre. This was not an attack on Elgar but BBC policy. If the BBC played Berlioz's *Symphonie Fantastique* thirty times a year, I would still question it.

But I have to challenge my own assessment. I admire the music of a certain composer who suffered from alcoholism for a short time in his life. At that time he was living a dissolute life. What is therefore the difference between adoring the music of a man who was a drunk for six years and objecting to Britten because he was grossly immoral most of his life?

Simply, because the music of my six year drunk is of superior quality and, to a lesser extent, he did not write any work advocating alcoholism or composing any work in praise of alcoholism.

But what right have I to say that this composer's work is superior? Because I have studied them in depth as a professional and qualified musician and have written extensively about their work with evidence and musical examples including Britten writing notes for instruments which they cannot get and which works had to be reprinted to eliminate these basic errors.

Let me make a simple comparison. You may, or may not, like St Paul's Cathedral as a building but you would have to admit that it is a greater feat of architecture and design than the leaky old shed that is falling down in my back garden.

The other matter about pop music is the tedious repetition. In a song by the female group The Saturdays they sing I just can't get enough 41 times in 150 seconds including non-stop repetition of the phrase about 17 times in the last 30 seconds.

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