

Nessie.
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When we regard music intellectually, without refer-
ence to its truths as a science, we naturally ^{think} either
of its origin, its nature or its power; and in these
three forms I shall consider it.

What then is the origin of music?
Whence came it among us, as a source of the highest
pleasure? Is it an art grounded upon imita-
tion or instinct? Are we musical because
we must be, or because we learn to be, or both?

The ancients regarded music as a special
gift of ^{the} Gods. Apollo's flute had been the medium
of their purest blessings, and nothing was more
grateful to their Deities than the incense of mu-
sic. And indeed we find it among all people
in the earliest times associated with their sa-
cred rites.

Modern philosophers have
taught that music came through the Egyptians
who learned it by imitating the wind as it
sighed through the reeds which grew upon the
Nile; the singing of birds or other sounds of na-
ture. — But, as it seems to me, music is an
instinct of our souls, its laws are a part of
ourselves, and every step we take in its prin-
ciples is but deciphering what is written, with-
in us. — For example, the human voice and

every instrument or is so formed that a half note must succeed three whole notes. — Who can solve the mystery of that principle! It is as truly a necessity of our being as the consciousness of identity. It requires years of practice to violate it successfully.

— It seems idle, then, to look for the origin of music in the external sounds of nature, for the trembling of a reed the roaring of a pine, the singing of a bird are no more the sounds of nature than the voice of man. — We have long associated music with dead notes and dumb instruments as if it dwelt in them or they possessed power of themselves to afford us pleasure. — But when we reflect a moment we shall see that these in their highest perfection, are only the poor mediums, through the composer is labouring to express what is pouring into his soul. — It is at first heard by no ear save his own, and that a mental ear. — When he has conceived it in his own mind the music itself is not there when he has committed it to paper it is not, then, when he has called together his orchestra from the north and the south it is there but gone again when they disperse. — We receive music from without, through the uncertain vibrations of air. But is there not a pure

essence lying back of these mediums, from which our mortality shuts us out? - What is that which is melting the soul of old Mozart as he sits alone in his silent study! No instruments are there, no voices; but he intently listens. Is it sweet sounds that he hears, or is this the silence of spirit communion? Has some a soul into the presence of which he is for a moment admitted. - It is wonderful indeed this origin of music as a human production. It is hidden in the depths of our mysterious being. - Like those intuitions of Deity which flash upon us in lucid moments, it comes with voiceless step and silent tongue revealing glimpses of spiritual glory. - Another element of music which strikes us, intellectually, is its subtle nature. You frail its ruin with matter! It has ever as it were to put on mortality of flesh. For all else entirely subservient to the human will, it will not, cannot remain, with us, dwell among us. - When the lyrist sweeps his strings, it steals across his lyre lingers for a moment and then dies away. When he is sad its plaintive wail breathes a gentle, soothing sympathy upon his soul. - When he is gay it comes in jubilant notes and brings a smelling of joy. But it retires from earth like the spirit of a friend and dwells alone in memory. In this respect how it differs from painting. When the painter has finished his picture, it becomes a thing. He has breathed

a soul into canvas and it lives there until the canvas
decays. It requires nothing more of the artist. It needs only the
light of heaven to convey to the organ by which it is admitted
to the mind. But not so with music! It is born a soul and strug-
gles for enough of form to be recognised; we strive in vain to re-
tain it as we do the soul of a picture. We may pile together
notes and instruments as we will but we have no music un-
til it is called by fixed laws from its spirit's home. — We have
nothing in this world more subtle in its nature than
music.

— Then consider for a mo-
ment the singular power of music. — Poets have ex-
hausted language in endeavoring to describe it. — Perhaps
some of the finest sentences the muses ever inspired are
upon this same theme. The old English bard exclaims,
Thou strain again! it had a dying fall.

O it came o'er my ear like the sweet South
That breathes upon a bank of violets
Stealing and giving odor.

Milton says.

At last a solemn breathing sound,
Arose like a steam of rich distilled perfume
And stole upon the air. I was all ear
And took in strains that might create a soul
Under the ribs of death.

In this strain have nearly all the true poets ap-
peared of the power of music & its influence differs
from almost every other in that it is, in itself,

when divested of all words and associations ~~entirely~~
entirely innocent. It ~~does not~~ teaches nothing.
It does not enlighten our views, nor enlarge
our understandings. It cannot reason, it can-
not preach, neither can it wound or defile. It
is not pure to the pure only it is pure to all. An
instrument, which is unskillful, enjoys the
glorious disability of expressing a single corrupt idea
or of inspiring a single vicious thought; and it
is an anomaly in human history that any form
of religion could ever condemn an organ, for it
could not say an impious thing if it would.

— To impart knowledge does not seem to be the
sphere of music; It appeals alone to pure feeling
that sacred fountain from which devotion springs.
And man is susceptible of no emotion in which
he cannot receive sympathy from music.

For his gayer hours she has a voice of gladness
And a smile of eloquence of beauty

And she glides into his darker musings

With a mild and gentle sympathy that steals
Away their sharpness ere he is aware.

This wonderful influence, then which we call
music, springing from the depths of our being; with
a nature as subtle as spirit itself; and a power as pure &
soothing as the fragrance of heaven, is most fitting in keep-
ing with the house of God. It steals upon the peaceful Sabbath
air as sweetly as an angel's voice. It seems to loosen

These bonds of mortality, to clear this darkened
glass and give us glimpses, face to face, of spirit-
ual ~~and~~ glories.

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