

Newcastle U3A General History Summary of Meeting

September 2018

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Clef Hangers and (Funny) Trom Bones from Catherine

Historical background: Catherine began the ppt with a general introduction to music history with overviews and examples of music and musical instruments from different time periods. We listened to examples.



There followed an overview of what music does to the brain and human moods e.g. Elizabethan and Classical eras.

Clef Hangers: *How do composers create tension, suspense and anxiety in music?*

We listened to part of a 20th century piece by **Carl Orff, 'O Fortuna'** and some of Turner's paintings were shown as backdrops to the music. It was first performed in **1937** to a Nazi audience which loved its epic and intent sounds which suited their ideals at the time.

The tension was created e.g. by dissonance, a series of contrasting music and terraced dynamics and pauses e.g. loud and soft, fast and slow.

We then compared it to **Beethoven's Piano Concerto No. 8, 1798**, which also has dissonance and suspense but created through quieter and more lulling tones.

Members commented on what they had noted about the comparisons between the



two pieces of music.

Richard Strauss' Thus Spoke Zarathustra', 1896. It was a tonal poem but also created suspense through the opening bars sounding like the low hum of drums and agitation. This music was very symbolic e.g. the new century about to dawn with hope for the future. The music was famously used as a theme to the film. '2001 A Space Odyssey'

Liszt's Hungarian Rhapsody No. 2, 1847 also displayed suspense through contrasts and changes in speed and mood. He revolutionised the music world with his performances in the early 19th century.

Funny (Trom) Bones: What makes music humorous?

Members were asked to guess the pianist from clues. It was Victor Borge, pianist and comedian. His sense of time, half - finished pieces of music, often beginning to play one piece but drifting into another that was harmonically suitable made his performances so funny and memorable. He used physical and visual elements in his performances.

We watched and listened to his tag duet of Liszt's Hungarian Rhapsody No.2



Music and acting match! More humour from a couple acting to **Beethoven's 5th Symphony, 1808.** Tension from the music – we all anticipate the first four notes- and the humour in the acting rounded off the meeting rather well!

Our members were thanked for their input and again being such a good audience

Next meeting:

Wednesday 17th October – 'Whose Tapestry?'

