

MUSIC IN LIFE AND WORSHIP

“See then that you walk circumspectly, not as fools but as wise, redeeming the time because the days are evil. Therefore do not be unwise, but understand what the Will of the Lord is. And do not be drunk with wine in which is dissipation, but be filled with the Spirit, speaking to one another in Psalms and hymns and spiritual songs, singing and making melody in your heart to the Lord, giving thanks always for all things to God the Father in the Name of our Lord Jesus Christ.” Ephesians 5:15-20

Artistic Relativism

Frequently one hears the opinion: *The Bible doesn't give any guidelines for music. It is all a matter of taste and preference.* However, the Bible speaks to all areas of life and music is no exception. Just as ethical relativism is immoral, so too is artistic relativism. Whether we are talking about music, art, architecture, literature, or economics, God's Word is our standard of right and wrong.

Creativity

Ultimately, God Himself is our artistic standard, just as He is our ethical standard. God has created us in His image to be creative. Whenever we make something, whether we are making a meal, a home, a tool, a book, or a building, the question is: have we made it well, as God makes all things well?

Old and New

Some of the things that God makes are new, such as the sunrise, sunset, a new born child, or a litter of kittens. Other things God has made are old, such as Table Mountain. Creativity is not measured by how long ago the creativity took place.

Biblical Principles for Music

Ephesians 5:15-20 makes it clear that music is to be melodious. We are to sing as unto the Lord. It is to be wholehearted. The content is to be Scriptural, with the Psalms predominating. Music is to be in the Name of the Lord Jesus Christ and thanksgiving for all things to God the Father in the Name of our Lord Jesus Christ is to characterise it.

“Let the Word of Christ dwell in you richly in all wisdom, teaching and admonishing one another in Psalms and hymns and spiritual songs, singing with grace in your hearts to the Lord.” Colossians 3:16

In all Circumstances

The Lord is to be praised, even in the worst of circumstances. Paul and Silas, even after having been seized and attacked by a mob, beaten with rods, unjustly thrown into prison, their response was to sing praises to God. *“But at midnight, Paul and Silas were praying and singing hymns to God and the prisoners were listening to them.”* Acts 16:25

Worship is the Overflow of a Redeemed Heart

“Rejoice in the Lord O you Righteous! For praise from the upright is beautiful. Praise the Lord for the harp; make melody to Him with an instrument of ten strings. Sing to Him a new song; play skillfully with a shout of joy.” Psalm 33:1-3

Worship is the natural response of a Christian. When we are saved, God puts a new song in our heart and we can't help but rejoice and praise the Lord, with melody, with instruments, skillfully and with a shout of joy.

How does our music measure up to the Word of God?

Defining Music

Webster's Dictionary defines *musical* as: *melodious; harmonious; pleasing to the ear...* By these definitions, much of what passes for music today would be more accurately described as noise.

Melody

The greatest musicians in history have agreed that melody is the very essence of music, but in much contemporary music the rhythm, or the beat, has taken over and the melody and harmony has either become obscured or vanished.

Experiments in Music

Scientific experiments have demonstrated that rock music makes both mice and men incapable of thinking clearly.

Mice, Mazes and Music

Mice exposed to three weeks of heavy metal music navigated mazes significantly slower than mice exposed to Mozart and other classical music. Rats exposed to repetitive, minimalist music, with hard driving beat, from birth to 60 days old were unable to navigate mazes at all. Whereas rats exposed to Mozart and other classical music were able to learn mazes over twice as fast as those who were exposed to no music at all.

An Accident Waiting for Somewhere to Happen

In tests using a driving instructor, it was found that listening to rock music while driving increased the incidence of drivers' error by over 34%. The conclusion of all these tests was rock music impairs your ability to think.

Increasing or Decreasing Intelligence

Mice exposed to the waltzes of Strauss showed increased and orderly neuron development. However, those exposed to dis-harmonic, non-synchronized drumbeats showed erratic and pathological growth of neurons. Preschool children who were given 6 months of keyboard instruction on a piano increased their spatial – temporal IQ scores by an average of 46% over other supplemental instruction, which included singing, computer and free play. There is no doubt that classical music improves one's intelligence whereas rock music dumbs one down.

Body, Mind and Soul

Although we may not be aware of it, as we listen to any piece of music our entire body, including our nervous system, is constantly reacting to the sound. Variations and pitch, rhythmic patterns, tempo and volume will affect our pulse rate, blood pressure, respiration and the function of certain glands. These in turn will create a mood and illicit a response.

Tension – Fulfillment

Music, like the human body, consists of many tension-resolution or fulfillment situations. When we are hungry, we can eat and be satisfied. If we are tired we can rest. All music has some tension. Good music will have periods of tension, but will follow with release and relaxation. Some types are mostly tension with very little relaxation. This builds frustration upon frustration - which frequently finds its release in negative behavior, such as anger and violence.

Music Moves Muscles

Rhythm is the recurrence, or repetition, of a beat or sound. Rhythm is the primary agent by which music stimulates and controls muscular action. It sets up a tension, which finds release in muscular movement. This is why many people tap their feet in time to a march. Throughout the centuries militaries have used drums in order to mobilise armies and to march them directly into the face of enemy fire and artillery.

Drums and Trances

A disorganised mob can be turned into a unified body when somebody begins a rhythmic chant and the rest pick it up. Witchdoctors use bongo drums to whip up their people into a frenzy, into trances and even into violence.

Physical Responses to Music

Certain rhythms affect more sensual body responses than others. The throbbing rhythms appeal to the fleshly nature and the natural response is in sensual movements. One can clearly see the difference in physical responses to the music of Bach, Handel, Mozart or Strauss, compared to rap, rock, hip-hop and rave or trance. In order to be satisfying to the ears and to release bodily tensions, dissonance must resolve to consonance and harmony. Unresolved dissonances which are so much a part of contemporary music actually build tension and frustration. Much of the contemporary music sounds angry. Dissonance creates mental and emotional restlessness. Compare the difference in attitude created in drivers' who are listening to pleasant, soothing classical music to the reaction of those drivers' who listen to throbbing, pulsating, angry rock-type music.

Dissonance

Dissonance is the clashing of harmonies. Early composers used dissonance sparingly, only within a well defined framework. Dissonance has been described as the musical spice, just a dash here and there. However, in the latter part of the 20th century and now into the 21st century, dissonance has frequently become the main dish. Imagine being served a plate full of salt, or pepper! Quite aside from appearance and taste, food needs to include balanced nutrition. A regular diet of only popcorn and candy floss will hardly suffice to maintain health and well-being.

Airlines and In-Flight Music

Airlines tend to play very soft, soothing, light and pleasant music, to put their passengers at ease. With all my international travel I have never yet found an airline that would play hard, throbbing rock-type music. The last thing any airline wants to do is exacerbate the tension that many of their passengers already feel about the idea of flying.

Classics and Rock in the Jungle

Bob Larson, in his book *Rock 'n Roll: The Devil's Diversion*, reports on a missionary who returned from furlough back to Africa with records of classical music and rock. First he played the classical music to members of the local tribe. They responded to the classical music with smiles and nods of approval. However when he, without warning, switched to rock, their calm and peaceful demeanour was shattered and they leapt up in confusion, obviously agitated. Some grasped their spears and took up a war footing. Others threw rocks at the record player!

Calling up the Spirits

Missionaries in Indonesia reported that when a visitor from America played some of the latest Christian contemporary music in their living room, members of the Kalimantan congregation

nearby rushed to the house wide-eyed and bewildered, asking: *Why are you calling on the evil spirits with your music?* They had no way of knowing that this was not the music of the witchdoctor, but the latest contemporary Christian music from America. To them the music meant that the missionary had left his senses and was communicating with demons.

The Beat

Frank Garlock, in *Music In the Balance*, wrote: *The rhythm in rock is the dominant part of the sound. The heavy emphasis on the beat is what distinguishes rock from any other type of music.*

Hypnotic

In *The Enjoyment of Music*, Joseph Macklis writes: *Rhythm is the element of music most closely aligned to body movement, to physical action. Its simple patterns when repeated over and over can have a hypnotic affect on us.*

A Slave to the Rhythm

When rock star Michael Jackson was asked why he made filthy sexual hand gestures on stage, he replied: *It's the music that compels me to do it, you don't think about it, it just happens. I'm a slave to the rhythm.*

Magical

Myrinda Bruce-Mitford in the illustrated book of *Signs and Symbols*, states: *Drums represent the beat of the heart and are played to summon up magic powers.*

Demonic

In *Satan's Music Exposed*, Lowell Heart, states: *Pagan dances and rituals are always accompanied by the incessant beat of drums. Rhythm plays a major role in those demonic activities.*

Voodoo

In *Rock 'n Roll, An Unruly History*, Robert Palmer states: *The ideas that certain rhythm pattern or sequences serve as conduits for spiritual energies linking individual human consciousness with the gods, is basic to traditional African religions... Rock 'n Roll can ultimately be traced back to African music of a primarily spiritual, or ritual nature. In a sense Rock 'n Roll is a kind of voodoo...*

Shamans

Today's drummer differs but a little from the Shaman in his incessant beating out of a rhythm, and likewise often enters into a form of trance while performing (The Secret Power of Music, by David Tame).

Satan's Music

Little Richard, the self-professed *Architect of Rock 'n Roll* readily admits satan's control and influence in his life in rock music: *My true belief about Rock 'n Roll is this: I believe this kind of music is demonic... a lot of the beats in music today are taken from voodoo, from the voodoo drums* (The Life and Times of Little Richard, by Charles White).

Celebrating Ugliness

Instead of focusing on attractive, uplifting and beautiful sounds and themes, much of modern music celebrates ugliness.

Rock 'n Roll Rebellion

Robert Walser in *The Rock 'n Roll Era*, observed: *Rock 'n Roll triggered a crisis in cultural authority*. Its advocates claimed it had no need for intelligence, but only feeling. This emphasis on the sensual was often accompanied by vice. From the 1969 Rock 'n Roll concert at Woodstock, sex, drugs and alcohol abuse have gone hand in hand with this new form of music, whose disseminators openly admitted that they wanted no moral restraints – either in their music, or in their behaviour.

Hole in Our Soul

Martha Bayles, in *Hole in Our Soul: The Loss of Beauty and Meaning in Music* noted that heavy metal music grew out of a *celebration of pedophilia, sadomasochism, heroin addiction and ritual murder... regards itself as an objective failure if all hell doesn't break loose. Some heavy metal rock videos have included depictions of female victims chained, caged, beaten and bound with barbed wire...*

Sounds of Drunkenness

Richard Weaver in *Ideas Have Consequences* observes that much of today's modern music caters to sensual pleasures and is often a revolt against God, against Biblical values, and even against society itself. He has observed that much of modern music is no longer the music of dreams, *but of drunkenness, which appeals to those who take pleasure in the thought of bringing down our civilization.*

Rebellion and Rejection

Professor Alvin Schmidt, author of *How Christianity Transformed Civilisation*, observes: *Heavy metal music, and much of the music of M-TV, has become increasingly rebellious – Rebellious against all Christian values, including sexual morality, human decency, the sanctity of life, human dignity, civilized language, and of course, against the beauty of serenity of music itself. Behind the rebellion lies the rejection of God and His only begotten Son, Jesus Christ, who for centuries inspired musicians to write music that raised the human spirit. It is its rebellious nature that has produced music that has a hole in its soul... or no soul at all.*

Zombie Dance with Demons

Certain types of rock music, such as house or trance have a heavy, incessant beat, the same beat that people in primitive cultures use in demonic rituals and dances. If the beat is monotonous enough and the volume loud enough, it can induce a type of hypnosis where people are no longer fully in control of their minds and thus open to demons.

Fleshly Music

Good music with its balance of melody, harmony and rhythm has an appeal to the mind and the intellect. Rock, rave, rap and hip-hop with their almost total emphasis on the beat, bypass the mind and work directly on the body. In other words, it appeals to the flesh.

A Heart Issue

Your body is connected to your mind which is connected to your soul. What affects your body will affect your mind, which will affect your soul. What you put into your mind impacts your soul. Whatever you put into your brain stays there and can be accessed as long as you have the right stimulus. Just think how many lyrics to songs that you can remember – especially television adverts. It's the music that helps you to remember the words.

What are you storing up in your heart through the music you are listening to?

“The good man brings good things out of the good stored up in his heart, and the evil man brings evil things out of the evil stored up in his heart. For out of the overflow of his heart his mouth speaks.” Luke 6:45

What is overflowing from your heart?

Beauty and Majesty

Throughout history, the greatest music was composed by musicians inspired by the life, death and Resurrection of Jesus Christ. The beauty and majesty one so skillfully conveyed by both sacred and secular music composed by Bach, Handel, Beethoven, Mozart and Strauss, has been replaced in much of the modern world, by music that no longer lifts up and inspires one to worship.

Angry and Ugly

The angry and ugly beat which so often predominates, appeals to the basest emotions and inspires more aggression and rebellion, appealing to the basest of instincts. Many modern composers and performers see life as meaningless and their music reflects that.

Nation Impacting

Plato declared: *Give me the songs of the nation and it matters not who writes its laws!*

Culture Shaping

Music is not only a reflection of a culture, but it is a major force in shaping culture. There is a tremendous power in music. Music can have a highly edifying affect on people by celebrating the beauty of God’s Creation, the Majesty of Almighty God, our Creator and Eternal Judge, inspiring and uplifting its listeners. Or it can promote immorality, rebellion, ugliness, or even death.

M-TV’s Strategy to Own the Children

Bob Pittman, the founder and former president of M-TV declared that M-TV would be able to accomplish its objective to *own the children* by: 1. *Getting their emotions going.* 2. *Making them forget their logic.* Pittman declared: *The strongest appeal is emotionally. If you can get their emotions going, make them forget their logic, you’ve got them. At M-TV, we don’t shoot for the 14 year olds, we own them!*

“Therefore come out from among them and be separate says the Lord. Do not touch what is unclean, and I will receive you. I will be a Father to you, and you shall be My sons and daughters, says the Lord Almighty.” 2 Corinthians 6:17-18

“Adulterers and adulteresses! Do you not know that friendship with the world is enmity with God? Who then, therefore, wants to be a friend of the world makes himself an enemy of God.” James 4:4

“For those who live according to the flesh set their minds on the things of the flesh, but those who live according to the spirit, things of the spirit. For to be carnally minded is death, but to be spiritually minded is life and peace. Because the carnal mind is enmity against God; for it is not subject to the Law of God, not indeed can be. So then, those who are in the flesh cannot please God.” Romans 8:5-8

Songs of Fallen Angels

Thomas Carlyle once said: *Music is well said to be the speech of angels.* Today could well observe that much of contemporary music is the speech of fallen angels.

Reclaim Music for Christ

This presents a clear challenge to each one of us who love the Lord Jesus Christ with all our heart, soul, mind and strength. Our Lord who gave us the Great Commission, to go into all the world and to make disciples of all nations, teaching obedience to all things that He has commanded, requires us to go into the world of music and to reclaim it for Christ. To reform music according to the Word of God, to test and approve what God's Will is – His good, pleasing and perfect Will.

“And do not be conformed to this world, but be transformed by the renewing of your mind that you may prove what is that good and acceptable and perfect Will of God.”

Romans 12:2

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