

A Quick Thought on Music

When it comes to modern music, it's safe to say that "anything goes." Technically, the definition of music reads along the lines of: "*the structured and eloquent arrangement of sound.*" Many people would argue that this definition has been thrown out the window. It's sometimes hard to find anything "structured" or "eloquent" in the sounds come from new garage bands or loud dance club.

Regardless of its specific definition, music (*in one form or another*) is present in all parts of our modern society. It is a chief form of entertainment, constantly played on the radio and in live concerts. It's used to set the mood for religious ceremonies, weddings, graduations, and other important occasions. Music is also played as an expression of pride – whether in the form of a national anthem or a school fight song. Many people also turn to music in personal situations. For example, a boxer may listen to loud rock music to psyche himself up before a big fight. Likewise, a broken-hearted teenager may turn the radio to the country station in hopes of being soothed by a slow, sad song.

Regardless of individual tastes, it can't be denied that music in general is capable of impacting people on an emotional level. For that reason, its role throughout history has been far from trivial. Music of an era can also provide a great "snapshot" for that time period.

Musicians are able to manipulate sound with a slew of different instruments. Some of them – like drums, trumpets, and flutes – have been around for centuries. Others – like electric keyboards and voice synthesizers – are relatively new. This enables new genres of music to be created, even if the basics remain the same.

And what about the future of music? There's one thing you can count on. Today's children won't like the music that their children play. It's a tradition. In the 1960s, parents were outraged by the music that teenagers were listening to. When those teenagers grew up and had children of their own, they got a taste of their own medicine – they hated the new music. With the exception of that basic rule, it's difficult to make any predictions about the future of music.

Trends in music usually change too quickly to ever really grasp. The popular music of the 1990s is yesterday's news, the long-haired bands of the 1980s seem silly, and the Disco music of the 1970s is something that many people would rather forget. Nonetheless, in every era there seems to be some music with staying power. Louis Armstrong, the jazz guru who was popular in the 1920s, is still widely listened to. Elvis Presley, who peaked in stature in the 1950s and 1960s, still has his share of fans. Even Mozart, who composed music in 1700s, is still heard by millions through classical radio. There's little doubt that these artists, and others, will continue to be respected and enjoyed in the future.



Just as it has in the past, future music will go far beyond the lines of mere entertainment – it will also serve as a statement of the times. In recent years, patriotic music has become popular in the United States. This is, in part, a result of the September 11th terrorist attacks and the war in Iraq. The opposite happened in the 1960s, during the Vietnam years, when the war was unpopular to many young Americans. Much of the music that was embraced at the time had an anti-war or peaceful message. In the future (*just as in the past*) the general acceptance of music will certainly be based on the current events the world.

Technology will probably also play its part in the future of music. Electronic synthesizers and other gadgets might be able to help anybody, even unskilled musicians, create eloquent compositions. Computer programs may also provide assistance to those trying to improve their musical skills. As the technology increases, it might be possible for computers to create great music based solely on musical patterns and theory.