

Cultural Philosophy in the Evolution of Western Music: Interpreting the Values of Music through Piano Performance

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Abstract: The concept of music is derived from the basis of organized sound; however, there are several organised sounds that are not music. Western music is characterised by its unique forms of Western and European influence. Thus, by analysing the works of Plato, Aristotle, Rousseau, and Kant through piano performance, we sought to examine the complex interplay between cultural philosophy, artistic values, and the form and content of music. Our study was conducted through philosophical texts analysis of Plato, Aristotle, Rousseau, and Kant based on their perspectives on music. Musical case analysis of Bach fugue, Chopin mazurka, Debussy prelude, and Beethoven sonata. Thematic analyses were also performed to identify recurrent themes. The findings showed that Plato emphasized the ethical dimensions, Aristotle focused on the cathartic and educational roles, while Rousseau underscored innate goodness and natural expression. Kant associated music with transcendental aesthetic judgment. These interpretation approaches have become integral to Western classical music performance traditions, reflecting the enduring impact of philosophical ideals on the expressive interpretation of musical works.

Keywords: Western Music; Plato; Aristotle; Rousseau; Kant; Bach Fugue; Chopin Mazurka; Debussy Prelude

1. INTRODUCTION

Western music is characterised by its unique forms of Western and European influenced nations with distinct musical forms, modes, structures and musical notes. Western music includes genres such as opera, symphonies, chamber quartet and concerto which are the basic and popular forms of western music (Burkholder et al., 2019). Additionally, Western music involves several instruments such as piano and guitar to create a smooth sensation for all listeners (Burkholder et al., 2019). According to Kania, musical philosophy revolves around basic issues of nature and value of music and how our experiences are shaped by the music (Kania, 2023). Musical philosophy presupposes knowledge of its target which is in contrast to the philosophy of science. Thus, the target of musical

philosophy lies in the fundamental practice that most individuals have extensive background of the musical culture because several people associate various music with significant roles and aspects of their lives.

The concept of music is derived from the basis of organized sound; however, there are several organised sounds that are not music. Therefore, the characterization of organized sound is too broad and encompasses human speech, machine sound and non-human animals (Hamilton, 2007; Kania, 2011). According to Scruton, the initial idea of music was to appeal to the tones or basically the musical features of pitch and rhythm (Scruton, 1997). Moreover, Levinson and Hamilton showed that music should appeal to the aesthetic features and experience (Hamilton, 2007; Levinson, 1992). Therefore, in modern philosophy we can either tune the initial basis of music in either of the conditions or a combined analyses of both tones and aesthetics. The initial appeal to the tones and musical features of pitch and rhythm has a major drawback because every sound can be incorporated into musical performances and therefore, characterization of the essential musical features derived from sounds appears inadequate. Therefore, we must only examine the untuned percussions used by conservative symphonists and the types of toilets, wind machines and typewriters. For example, in the musical works of *Sinfonia Antartica* by Ralph Vaughan Williams, the *Typewriter* by Leroy Anderson, and *Toilet Piece/Unknown* by Yoko Ono (Kania, 2023). Thus, the proposition of appealing to musical features of tones, pitch and rhythm have led to a complex and sophisticated intentional and response-based theories about tones in order to overcome this drawback. Therefore, the argument is that, if the basic musical features are extrinsic and related to how it is perceived, then it is classified as an indiscernible musical sound. The appeal to aesthetics without the concept of tonality leads to significant poetic challenges of non-musical aesthetically organized sounds. According to Levinson, the aesthetic appeal of music should exclude explicit linguistic sounds that are organized (Levinson, 1992). However, it raises a significant concern because there is no clarity on the additional distinctions to be made between various forms of sound. Hamilton proposes a tripartite division where the art of sound as opposed to music and literature is a crucial artistic form of the 20th century (Hamilton, 2007). Hamilton asserts that appealing to tonal and aesthetic aspects of music creates a distinction between the arts of sound and arts of music and literature which is impossible to deduce from the views of Levinson (Hamilton, 2007). Furthermore, embracing the appeals of aesthetics, Hamilton's views are bound to exclude the scales and Muzak from music. Music has several philosophical puzzles and questions

compared to other forms of arts (Reimer, 2022). For instance, artistic painting is applied in one instance whereas musical arts can be applied in various instances with none of them being specific to a particular instance of the musical works. Thus, musical works tend to have greater puzzles than artistic paintings which are usually viewed as ordinary physical objects. The instance of a musical work is determined based on performances that give an accurate representation and interpretation of the work and its form. Additionally, the musical works can be analysed independently from different perspectives devoid of any performances. Interpretation of music is based on the proposition that it is an art embedded with meaning. In contrast to drama, musical arts have at least a pure instrumental version without a clear and obvious semantic meaning. Thus, several philosophers have found music to be very valuable and channelled their thoughts on the apparent capabilities of music in expressing emotions while retaining its abstraction form. Western classical music has gained recognition in the last 25 years due to its diverse forms and practices that offer different answers to the same and existing philosophical questions. Additionally, western classical music has raised various philosophical questions coupled with western traditions of rock and jazz that have gained popularity (Kania, 2011). The western philosophical traditions have its origins from the ancient Greece and has extensively analysed the nature and value of music. Aesthetic values and features have been a significant concern of western philosophical on music until the early modernisation. The works of Plato and Aristotle in music were mainly concerned with its educational and political aspects in the society. The medieval thinkers attributed music to the metaphysical speculations; hence, neglecting music as an art is somewhat surprising despite being aligned with the emergence of aesthetics as a component of philosophy. In the Middle Ages, music theorists and artists focused on the sensation derived from music with subsequent shifts in musical prompts analysing the value and origin of music in its capacity to arouse emotions (Pesic, 2022). In the 18th century, music theorists proposed a system of arts that imitated nature and examined how music could fit into the system. The basic concern in ancient Greek musical philosophy was the connection between the capacity of music to initiate and imitate emotions alongside its social values.

Plato (428-347BCE) and Aristotle (384-322BCE) focused on the fundamental relations between social values and initiation of emotions from musical works (H. Aristotle, 2014; Plato, 1997a). Ancient philosophers rejected the ideas that music contained valuable information beyond the pleasures derived from it. They hold skeptical views about the

educational values of music, for instance, the works of epicurean Philodemus (110-c. 30BCE) in his *De Musica*, disagreed with the widespread views that music was capable of imitating passions and asserted that music was not better at representing the psychological states of an individual than the artistic forms of cooking (Philodemus, 1993). In his works, Philodemus appealed to Democritus (460-c. 370BCE) but there was insufficient information about the views of Democritus.

However, Democritus believed that music stood at a lower level compared to other artistic forms based on utility (Brancacci & Morel, 2007). Additionally, Sextus Empiricus (3rd century CE) in his works (*Against the Musicians*) does not believe that music had any positive educational values. However, he alludes that individuals are capable of enjoying music, there is no contribution derived from the study of music. Sextus Empiricus draws similar comparisons between cooking and music and argues that in either case, enjoyment is an independent aspect of thought processes related to what is being enjoyed (Empiricus & Greaves, 1986).

1.1 Melody

The musical writings of Jean-Jacques Rousseau (1712-1778) revolved around several topics ranging from musical notation and theory to the core philosophical concerns of expression and values (Jiang, 2022). Additionally, Rousseau wrote the opera *Le Devin du Village* in 1752 that was highly successful and performed for more than 500 times in 5 decades before his death. Rousseau was a fierce critic of Jean-Phillipe Rameau (1683-1764) who was a renowned music theorist of the time (Rameau, 1726), in his rejection, he proposed that music theory and the entire music practice did not justify the French music of that time. In his Letter on French Music in 1753, Rousseau was viewed as an episode of the querelle des bouffons involving disputes concerning the relative advantages and progress of Italian and French Opera activated by the 1752 Paris performances of Giovanni Battista Pergolesi's *La serva padrona*. In his letter, Rousseau assumes the proposition of the Italian music and asserts that it is superior to French music due to the Italian language being more melodious and better articulation compared to French music (Rousseau, 1753).

1.2 Form and Content

Immanuel Kant is a modern philosopher who analysed instrumental music based on the context of systematic examination of arts (Kant, 1790; Ravasio, 2021). His comments and works on music are considered to lack

sensitivity to artistic values and forms. The ideas of Kant on music are derived from a perspective of beauty that requires reconstruction. Kant compares the beautiful and aspires it to be the universality with the agreeable that is purely idiosyncratic and subjective.

Kant's influence on music especially formal strands was acknowledged despite being controversial and defends various formalism (Clewis, 2023). Kant viewed music from a perspective of beauty that should undergo reconstruction; he contrasted the beautiful to the universal principles of agreeable that are subjective and idiosyncratic.

In Kant's views, when individuals associated beauty to determine judgments of taste, they produced subjective judgments involving a feeling of pleasure. Therefore, judgments of taste shared similarities with judgments of agreeableness. However, the beautiful is distinct from the agreeable because it has an element of disinterested pleasure (pleasure that does not assume the existence of its object).

1.3 Artistic Value of Music

The philosophical views on the values of music are linked to the implicit restriction of artistic values of pure instrumental music works. These philosophical views are motivated by the abstract nature of music and it's not clear whether they could be extended to musical hybrids such as song. All music is not considered art and non-art forms of music can have significant artistic values.

Several philosophers consider the intrinsic value of artworks as an inherent property because the essence of the value of the work is linked to the experience it offers. Therefore, artworks are not valued instrumentally as a means to an end but intrinsic to themselves (Budd, 1997; Levinson, 1992). Therefore, the fundamental question is that which experience that makes the experience of an artwork valuable. The answer to the question is in the pleasure derived from artistic works which cannot be neglected and at the point by which a consensus is realised (Kivy, 1997; Levinson, 1992). The consensus is associated with the pleasures realised in the sensation produced by music which is trivial and insufficient to ground the significant values derived from music.

1.4 Rationale and Objective

The evolution of Western music is deeply intertwined with cultural philosophy from the ancient Greeks to the modern era. Western philosophers such as Plato, Aristotle, Kant and Rousseau have shaped our

understanding of music's role in society, its aesthetic values, and its relationship to emotion and expression. Therefore, our study examines into this diverse history through piano performance, exploring how these philosophical perspectives manifest in the interpretation and execution of music. Thus, by analysing the works of Plato, Aristotle, Rousseau, and Kant through piano performance, we unravel the complex interplay between cultural philosophy, artistic values, and the form and content of music.

2. METHODOLOGY

2.1 Study Design

Our study involves a case study approach consisting of cultural philosophy and western music based on piano performance. In our case study, we examined a select group of piano works and performances across historical periods and styles to explore how the philosophical works of Plato, Aristotle, Rousseau and Kant manifest in the analysis and interpretation of music.

2.2 Textual Analysis

We carried out textual analysis focusing on the philosophical texts of Plato, Aristotle, Rousseau, and Kant based on their perspectives on music, value and aesthetics. Each philosopher's insights on the foundational basis of music were analysed. Plato in his Republic was analysed for his provoking stance on the role of music in shaping the character of individuals while the Politics by Aristotle was analysed for its cathartic and educational values of music. The Social Contract by Rousseau was examined for views on the innate aspects of humanity and the natural state of goodness found in music. The Critique of Judgment by Kant was examined for divergent and transcendental perspectives on music.

2.3 Musical Case Analyses

Our musical case analyses focused on formal and expressive dimensions of piano work. We selected the piano works of Bach Fugue, Chopin mazurka, Mozart's Piano Sonata No. 16 in C Major K. 545 ("*Sonata facile*") during the classical period, Schumann's Carnival Op. 9 during the early romantic period, Rachmaninoff's Prelude in C-sharp Minor, Op. 3, No. 2 during the late romantic period, Bartók's Mikrokosmos, BB 105 during the 20th century, and Debussy prelude. The musical works of Bach fugue were selected to exemplify the structured and conceptual features of the Baroque

period while a Chopin mazurka was selected to show the focus of the romanticism era on individual freedom and emotional expressions. Furthermore, the Debussy prelude was selected to examine the deviation of the Impressionist era from conventional focus and tones on evoking emotions based on texture and colour. We focused our analysis on musical aspects of tempo and dynamics on how they reflect the emotional implications of the musical piece and alignment with philosophical frameworks. Furthermore, we examined how articulation choices of legato, staccato and phrasing of music contributed to emotional expressions and the character of performance. Lastly, the use of pianist use of rubato, dynamics and various forms of expression to alter the emotional expression of listeners.

2.4 Thematic Analysis

Thematic analyses were performed to identify recurrent themes in the selected piano works. The themes were obtained from melodic motifs, rhythmic patterns, harmony and structural elements. In Bach fugue, recurrent themes identified from contrapuntal motifs while the Chopin's mazurka the melodious expressions and rubato could be examined. Furthermore, the identified themes and the philosophical views of Plato, Aristotle, Rousseau, and Kant were examined how the motifs aligned with social order and structure, transcendental aesthetic judgments and emotional expressions.

2.5 Comparative Data Analyses

Comparative analyses were performed across interpretations and philosophers. Across philosophers we compared how different performances of the same piece embody or challenge the key concepts from each philosopher. Interpretations were based on how different pianists approach the same philosophical themes within the piece, highlighting the subjectivity and artistry involved in interpreting philosophical ideas through music. Data analysis involved close reading of the relevant passages from each philosopher's work, focusing on their specific ideas about music, aesthetics, and value. The points of convergence and divergence between the philosophers' ideas considering how these differences might manifest in different interpretations of music. All the chosen piano works were analysed in terms of their structure, melody, harmony, rhythm, and texture, identifying how these elements might reflect or challenge the philosophical concepts identified in the textual analysis.

3. RESULTS

Table 1: Key Concepts and Philosophical Connections

Philosopher	Key Concept	Musical Elements Embodied	Examples
Plato	Ethical Dimensions of Music	Form, structure, order, balance	Bach fugue: Counterpoint as representation of ethical harmony
Aristotle	Cathartic & Educational Role	Emotional expression, tension and release, virtuosity	Chopin mazurka: Rubato and melodic flourishes for emotional catharsis
Rousseau	Innate Goodness & Natural Expression	Individuality, improvisation, emotional freedom	Debussy prelude: Evocative textures and subjective interpretation
Kant	Transcendental Aesthetic Judgment	Sublime experience, beauty beyond pleasure, contemplation	Beethoven sonata: Grand gestures and structural complexity evoking awe

In Table 1, Plato, emphasized the ethical dimensions of music, associating it with form, structure, order, and balance. He illustrated this through the example of a Bach fugue, where counterpoint serves as a representation of ethical harmony. Aristotle, on the other hand, focused on the cathartic and educational roles of music, highlighting emotional expression, tension and release, and virtuosity. The musical embodiment of these principles is exemplified in a Chopin mazurka, utilizing rubato and melodic flourishes to achieve emotional catharsis.

Jean-Jacques Rousseau, with his philosophy centred on innate goodness and natural expression, emphasized individuality, improvisation, and emotional freedom in music. The Debussy prelude is presented as an example, showcasing evocative textures and subjective interpretation. Immanuel Kant, known for his transcendental aesthetic judgment, associated music with sublime experiences, beauty beyond pleasure, and contemplation. This is reflected in a Beethoven sonata, where grand gestures and structural complexity evoke a sense of awe.



Figure 1: A Word Cloud of Key Ideas in Music and Philosophical Analysis

In Figure 1, the word cloud is dominated by the word "music," revealing a central preoccupation with the nature of music and its philosophical underpinnings of Plato, Aristotle, Rousseau, and Kant. The prominence of "expression" alongside "order" and "structure" suggests a critical tension between emotional freedom and artistic rigor. Terms like "emotional," "freedom," and "aesthetic" highlight music's ability to evoke feelings, offer subjective interpretation, and create beauty. The relative size of each word reflects its importance, suggesting that "music" remains the primary focus, while the philosophers contribute to a richer understanding of its multifaceted nature.

Table 2: Musical Analysis: Formal Elements & Philosophy

Musical Element	Philosophical Connection	Piano Work Example
Counterpoint	Order and structure (Plato, Aristotle)	Bach fugue: Interweaving melodies representing harmonious balance
Rubato	Individual expression and freedom (Rousseau)	Chopin nocturne: Flexible tempo reflecting personal sentiment
Tonality	Transcendental unity and objectivity (Kant)	Mozart sonata: Clear tonal centre anchoring subjective experience
Dissonance and Tension	Cathartic release and emotional engagement (Aristotle)	Scriabin's prelude: Harmonically complex sections leading to cathartic resolution

Table 2 elucidates the interplay between specific musical elements, philosophical connections, and illustrative piano compositions. Counterpoint associated with order and structure by both Plato and Aristotle finds embodiment in the Bach fugue where interweaving melodies symbolize harmonious balance. The philosophical notion of individual expression and freedom as proposed by Rousseau aligns with the musical element of Rubato demonstrated in Chopin's nocturne through a flexible tempo that reflects personal sentiment. The concept of transcendental unity and objectivity in Kantian philosophy corresponds to Tonality exemplified in Mozart's sonata where a clear tonal centre anchors subjective experience. The connection between dissonance, tension, and

cathartic release as outlined by Aristotle is manifested in Scriabin's prelude where harmonically complex sections lead to a cathartic resolution.

Table 3: Musical Analysis: Expressive Elements & Philosophy

Musical Element	Philosophical Connection	Piano Work Example
Dynamics	Ethical implications and emotional nuance (Plato, Aristotle)	Beethoven sonata: Dynamic shifts highlighting internal struggle and resolution
Articulation	Natural expression and individual character (Rousseau)	Debussy's "Claire de Lune": Staccato notes depicting moonlight's shimmering reflections
Tempo	Aesthetic judgment and subjective experience (Kant)	Chopin ballade: Slow tempo inviting deep contemplation and internal dialogue
Timbre and Texture	Evocative atmosphere and aesthetic judgment (Kant, Debussy)	Ravel's "Gaspard de la nuit": Orchestral textures creating immersive sonic landscapes

In Table 3 and Figure 2, Dynamics reflect ethical complexities and emotional views as exemplified by Beethoven's sonatas where dynamic shifts mirror internal struggles and eventual resolutions. Articulation mirrors natural expression and individual character seen in Debussy's "Claire de Lune" where staccato notes evoke the shimmering reflections of moonlight.

Tempo becomes a tool for aesthetic judgment and subjective experience as Chopin's ballades utilize slow tempos to invite deep contemplation and internal dialogue. Finally, timbre and texture tap into evocative atmospheres and aesthetic judgment as Ravel's "*Gaspard de la nuit*" demonstrates with its orchestral textures creating immersive sonic landscapes.

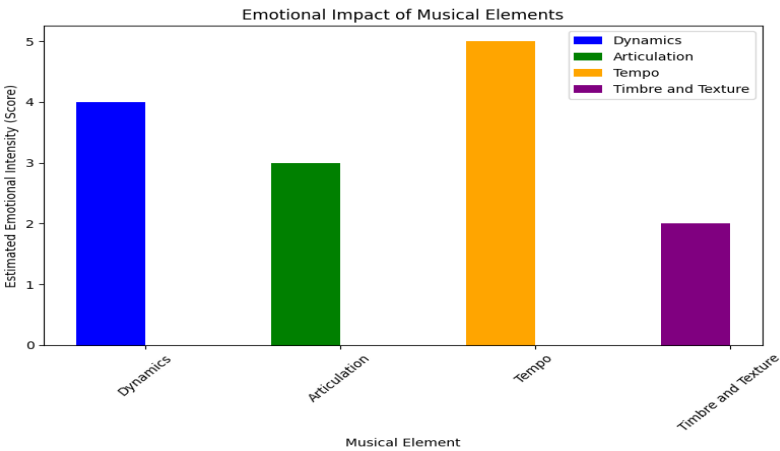


Figure 2: The Estimated Emotional Intensity Scores Against Various Musical Elements

Table 4: Performance Analysis: Interpretations & Philosophy

Performance Aspect	Philosopher	Interpretation Approach	Example
Tempo	Plato	Consistent, adherence to formal structure	Bach fugue: Strict tempo maintaining order and clarity
Tempo	Aristotle	Elastic, emphasizing emotional nuances	Chopin mazurka: Rubato highlighting dramatic moments
Dynamics	Rousseau	Individualized, reflecting personal expression	Debussy prelude: Dynamic variations emphasizing subjective interpretation
Dynamics	Kant	Gradual shifts, building towards awe-inspiring moments	Beethoven sonata: Crescendos culminating in sublime impression

In Table 4, Plato's interpretation approach is rooted in a consistent tempo and adherence to formal structure is exemplified in the Bach fugue where a strict tempo is maintained to ensure order and clarity. In contrast, Aristotle's approach leans towards an elastic tempo emphasizing emotional nuances as seen in the Chopin mazurka where rubato is employed to highlight dramatic moments. Rousseau's emphasis on individual expression is reflected in an individualized approach to dynamics showcased in the Debussy prelude through dynamic variations that emphasize subjective interpretation. Kant's interpretation approach involves gradual shifts in dynamics and building towards awe-inspiring moments as demonstrated in the Beethoven sonata where crescendos culminate in a sublime impression.

Table 5: Synthesis and Evolution of Themes Across Western Eras

Era	Dominant Philosophical Influence	Recurring Musical Themes	Example Piano Works
Baroque	Plato & Aristotle	Order, structure, counterpoint, clarity	Bach fugue, Handel concerto
Romantic	Rousseau & Kant	Individual expression, freedom, emotional exploration, sublime experiences	Chopin nocturne, Schumann sonata
Impressionist	Kant & Debussy	Evocative textures, subjective interpretations, blurred tonality	Debussy prelude, Ravel suite

In Table 5 and Figure 3, the Baroque was imbued with the ideas of Plato and Aristotle and embraced order, structure, and clarity. Thus, it resonated with the counterpoint of Bach's fugues and the architecture of Handel's

concertos. Romanticism guided by Rousseau and Kant saw a shift towards individual expression. Chopin's nocturnes and Schumann's sonatas became avenues for emotional exploration seeking the sublime through passionate outbursts and introspective melodies. Finally, the Impressionist era marked by Kant and Debussy's influence was marked by subjective interpretations and evocative textures. Debussy's preludes and Ravel's suites blurred tonal boundaries inviting listeners to immerse themselves in sonic landscapes that shimmered like fleeting impressions.

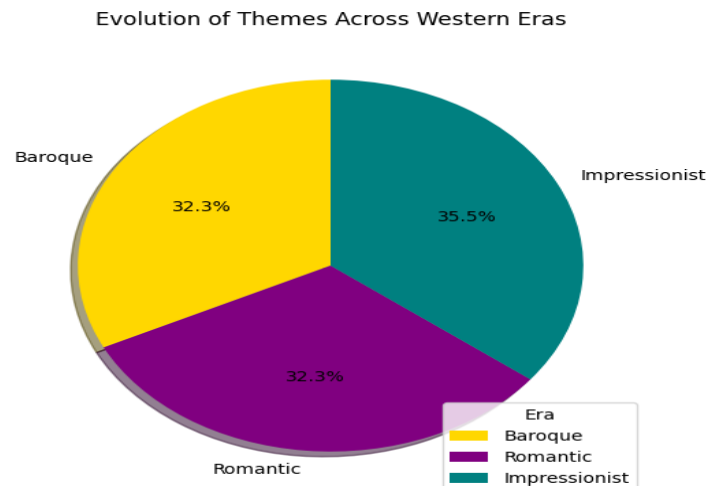


Figure 3: Evolution of Themes Across Western Eras of Baroque, Romanticism and Impressionism

4. DISCUSSION

Our findings proposed that in the exploration of philosophy and music, Plato emphasizes the ethical dimensions, Aristotle focuses on the cathartic and educational roles, while Rousseau underscores innate goodness and natural expression. Kant associate's music with transcendental aesthetic judgment. Musical elements such as counterpoint, rubato, tonality, and dissonance were analysed revealing their embodiment in compositions by Bach, Chopin, Mozart, and Scriabin, respectively. Additionally, interpretation approaches were examined with Plato advocating for a consistent tempo reflecting formal structure, Aristotle endorsing an elastic tempo emphasizing emotional nuances, Rousseau promoting individualized dynamics for personal expression, and Kant supporting gradual shifts in dynamics leading to awe-inspiring moments.

Plato is a foundational figure in Western philosophy who perceives music as a vehicle for ethical exploration. Labuschagne suggested that his emphasis on order, structure, and balance in music reflects his broader

philosophical principles (Labuschagne, 2019). In the Bach fugue, counterpoint becomes a manifestation of ethical harmony using melodies to represent a harmonious balance (AKINYEMI, 2022). Plato's influence on Western culture can be seen in the enduring significance of classical music, where the structured and balanced compositions of Bach and others echo his ideals. The prominence of classical forms in Western musical tradition reflects a lasting connection to Plato's vision of music as a medium for moral contemplation.

Plato and his contemporaries spoke about music (*Mousike*) in its broader set of artistic forms compared to the modern artistic forms. In essence, *Mousike* defines a seamless complex of interrelationships between poetic words, instrumental music and physical movements (Murray & Wilson, 2004). According to Plato, he used the term *Mousike*, in a narrow sense to depict the elements of rhythm and melody that is considered as musical in the modern society (Schofield, 2010). Plato's ideas on music were that it could contribute positively to the education of the youth and younger populations and have an overall impact on the accurate and correct functioning of the society. Despite the positive effect of music, it can have several dangers to the society. According to Plato (Plato, 1997a) concerns about musical education of citizens revolved around the assumption that alterations and changes in musical taste should be closely examined or eliminated because they will lead to several changes in the society. Plato proposes that the description of changes in musical taste that preceded the Persian wars was a catalyst for the rejection of societal unrests and authority (Plato, 1997a, 1997b).

According to Plato, the sense in the world is a representation of the imperfect copy of the immutable and perfect ideas. Plato's view of all artistic forms inclusive of music, is that they were all imitations (*mimesis*) of objects found in the sensible world. Therefore, the famous renowned condemnation of arts in his Book X of the Republic occurred. Furthermore, the world is already a copy and the arts are considered copies of the copy. Thus, Plato's metaphysical world explains and highlights the dismissive view of epistemic values of arts.

Plato's views on musical imitation of certain human emotions could be ethically constructive, particularly in the younger stages of the youth and children where they are highly responsive to ethical discussions derived from rational and discursive perspectives. In his description, Plato proposes an indirect description of emotions derived from music, because the emotion of a steadfast individual and resilient during misfortunes or constant fights reflects the emotion experienced by an individual who is

engaged in a peaceful, voluntary and unforced actions (Plato, 1997b). Thus, Plato's views on these musical emotions revolve around modernisation and courage which are best imitated in the Dorian and Phrygian modes. The Dorian and Phrygian modes imitate the voluntary and destructive tones of voice of those individuals who are modest and courageous based on good or bad experiences (Plato, 1997b).

Plato's interpretation of musical imitation of emotions is based on the resemblance of music to the expressions of human behaviour, especially the vocals. In several occasions, Plato asserted that music imitates the human body movements linked with various emotions. Thus, it can be analysed that the initial defence to the notion of musical expressiveness is based on the music's resemblance to expressions of human behaviour, this position has been maintained till the 21st century (Ravasio, 2021). Aristotle views on music are closely similar to Plato's views because they share similar views of the value of music residing in imitating emotions. Aristotle clarified that all the artistic forms are imitative despite having different means, objects and forms of imitation (In the Poetics, 1447a). Aristotle presents a more positive version of imitation compared to Plato and shows that humans are subject to imitation since childhood and that it is a form of learning. The cognitive aspect of imitation explains the feelings of pleasure derived from repulsion or ugly life conditions (Aristotle, 2014).

Aristotle introduced the concept of indicators or signs (*semeia*) of various emotional states and the states themselves. The signs of various emotional states refer to the observable behaviours accompanying the occurrence of every state. Aristotle believed that visual arts are a mere imitation of the signs of emotions. For example, a painter can choose to represent a man weeping or smiling; however, music is capable of imitating the emotional states of weeping or smiling. Therefore, Aristotle viewed that music is capable of arousing the emotions it imitates and therefore, its capacity explains the mechanisms by which music imitates the emotional states rather than the emotions themselves. Halliwell proposes that musical imitation cannot be independently specified from emotional responses induced by music around the listener (Halliwell, 2009).

Aristotle explained the connection between musical views and education by suggesting that when men hear imitations that are separated from the rhythms and tunes themselves, their feelings are synchronized in sympathy. Furthermore, since music elicits pleasure and excellence is achieved by rejoicing, loving and hating rightly; there is nothing that humans are concerned with acquiring and cultivating than the power of making right and accurate judgments while taking delight in the good dispositions and

noble activities (H. Aristotle, 2014). Thus, the argument of Aristotle is that music imitates character, implying the several dispositions and emotional states which generates pleasure to the listener. Hence, restricting the musical imitations to those that are morally worthy states, then, listeners will derive pleasure from these states in real life. The fundamental assumption is that the pleasure associated in engagement with imitations will extend to the experiences of the imitated object in real life situations. Our findings were similar to Ferrari who postulated that Aristotle with a focus on the cathartic and educational roles of music adds emotional depth to the philosophical discourse (Ferrari, 2019). The Chopin mazurka with its use of rubato to highlight dramatic moments exemplifies Aristotle's emphasis on emotional expression and tension and release (Cook, 2020). The emotional resonance of Chopin's work has made an enduring impact on Western classical and romantic music influencing later composers and contributing to the emotional richness inherent in much Western musical tradition. French music often addresses the drawback of language by incorporating complicated harmonic structures; however, Rousseau believed that this strategy hindered the expressive capabilities of French music. The Italian music was more moving despite the absence of chords that were filled out. Rousseau proposes the principle of unity of melody (*unité de mélodie*) that suggests that music should present the listener with a single salient melody at any given time while the other voices represent supportive and subsidiary roles. Thus, it is from the principle of unity of melody that music has derived its potential to move listeners and this unity of melody resides in the value of the music (Riley, 2017).

Rousseau had a controversial perspective on harmony as a setback to the development of melody and consequently condemned French Music with a target on Rameau (Rameau, 1722). In his defence, Rameau postulated that melody was a mere part of harmony and in his subsequent works of *Nouveau système de musique théorique*, he showed that the tonal system in music was a result of the upper partial harmonics while the faint overtones were the result of any musical notes produced. Therefore, there is no pure melody because no musical note is produced and heard in isolation from the harmonics it generates. The ascending pattern of upper harmonics consists of the keys to tonal harmony. In the *Encyclopédie* article "Dissonance", Rousseau argues that harmony is partially based on the structure of harmonic series and challenges the views of Rameau on the absence and source of the minor third from the series despite being a critical aspect of harmony. The musical aesthetics of Rameau were based on the musical theories involving physical and

mathematical constructs that could not be derived from the experience of listening to music. In contrast, Rousseau considered these experiences as the ultimate determiners of the value of music and held that they pointed to melody as a critical aspect of the emotional impact to the listener (O'dea, 2016).

Rousseau's philosophy emphasizes the innate goodness and natural expression in individuals' principles vividly reflected in his musical ideals (Holley, 2019). The Debussy prelude with its evocative textures and subjective interpretation mirrors Rousseau's celebration of individuality and emotional freedom. In Western culture the exploration of individual expression in music is a hallmark of the Romantic period and subsequent movements reflecting Rousseau's enduring influence on the philosophy of music.

According to Kant, judgments of taste are not dependent on concepts and ideas and often include subjective components of pleasure, non-cognitive processes and cannot be associated with the general validity of mathematical proofs. Although, judgments of taste are considered universal, because when an individual judges an object as beautiful, at the same time, they also infer that anyone else would find it beautiful (Kant, 1790). However, this view contradicts the agreeable because when an individual judges the taste of a calvados as pleasant, it does not require the general assent; however, the pleasures associated with the musical works are the one expected to be felt due to the inherent beauty in the piece of music. There is a non-conceptual universality of taste that is grounded in Kant's views of "free play of the imaginative and comprehension" (Kant, 1790). The common perceptual and cognitive activities necessitate the coherent connections between understanding and imagination, thus, Kant views perception as a component of imagination. However, in these scenarios, imagination is based on the concepts. In the free musical plays where judgments of taste are required, the principles of imagination and understanding combine without the restrictions of concepts in a manner such that it becomes common to all humans. The distinction between beautiful arts and agreeable arts is that the latter involves arousal of enjoyment while the former involves cognitive processes. However, the ambiguity in Kant's views on music is multifaceted such that he appears to contradict himself, especially on the status of music as a beautiful form of art. Kant proposes that *Tafelmusik* (consisting of light music composed as a background music to the dining) and the art of telling amusing stories as an agreeable form of art. Additionally, he adds that this form of music is designed to promote conversation with minimal attention to its

composition. In the conclusion (“Remark”) to his works of the Critique, he proposes that music and jokes are an agreeable form of art. In contrast to other sections of his works, he suggests that music is a beautiful form of art and is ranked with painting and poetry. It is important to note that Kant discusses music as sub-division of the beautiful arts. Previous studies by Matherne have suggested that Kant’s hesitation is based on the distinct attitudes assumed by various individuals to music (Matherne, 2014). For instance, paying attention to the bodily piece of musical works, then it becomes an agreeable form of arts whereas if individuals focus on the formal aspects and structure of musical works, then it becomes a judgment of taste and can be considered a beautiful form of arts. In terms of musical beauty, Kant differentiates between free and adherent (*anhängend*) beauty (Phillips, 2022; Ravasio, 2021). The latter suggests that beauty is a concept of the purpose of the object; hence, a piece of architecture is deemed beautiful based on its success or its capacity to accommodate people, institutions and businesses. The resultant judgment based on taste is viewed by Kant as impure. In contrast free beauty does not assume the existence of any concepts because free beauty exists in patterns of abstraction and assumes the form of instrumental music. Therefore, in the views of Kant he views it with a pure instrumental musical pattern in his mind. The previous thought of philosophers on music was not exclusively devoted to vocal music and divergent views would signify a fundamental modern shift to the philosophy of music.

Kant affirmed that music has a relationship to the sphere of emotions. He agrees with the notion of *Affektenlehre* which suggests that musical works are capable of arousing specific emotions in the listener. Kant asserts that music is capable of conveying emotions because it draws analogy with the tonal voice that is similar to impassioned speech (Kant, 1790). Young proposes that music adheres to the theory of expression where it imitates the tone features of an impassioned speech (Young, 2020). In contrast, Matherne, reconciles the elements of expression and formality by introducing the concept of aesthetics (Matherne, 2014). Kant's transcendental aesthetic judgment introduces a metaphysical dimension to music positing it as a means to achieve sublime experiences beyond mere pleasure. The Beethoven sonata with its grand gestures and structural complexity evoking awe aligns with Kant's vision of music transcending the sensory. This perspective has had a profound impact on Western classical music contributing to the development of monumental and emotionally charged compositions that seek to elicit profound aesthetic experiences. The pure value of music is a puzzle that can be solved from

various dimensions. Initially, the extent by which music is regarded as abstract. The abstraction in music is based on an individual's thought whether it is separated from the real world; therefore, the argument is that its value is not puzzling compared to other forms of art that are related to the real world such as sculpture, paintings and literature. Thinking about the abstract value of music lies in its source of values. Therefore, the argument on the theory of music is the extent by which it is related to the real world by means of expressions which constitutes its primary value while the formal features are derived from its abstraction.

5. CONCLUSION

Our study found that examining musical elements through the philosophical perspective reinforces the integration of theory and practice in Western music. Bach's use of counterpoint in the fugue encapsulates Plato's pursuit of order and structure. Chopin's incorporation of rubato in the mazurka exemplifies Aristotle's emphasis on emotional expression. Mozart's clear tonal centre in the sonata reflects Kant's transcendental unity, and Scriabin's complex harmonies leading to cathartic resolution embody Aristotle's ideas of tension and release. The interpretation approaches endorsed by philosophers manifest in performance practices shaping the expressive qualities of Western classical music. Plato's call for consistency and adherence to formal structure finds resonance in the strict tempo of Bach's fugue. Aristotle's elastic approach to tempo emphasizing emotional nuances is embodied in the rubato of Chopin's mazurka. Rousseau's encouragement of individual expression is evident in the dynamic variations of Debussy's prelude. Kant's call for gradual shifts leading to awe-inspiring moments materializes in the crescendos of Beethoven's sonata.

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