Your Name

Instructor Name

Course Number

Date

Music

**Introduction**

Music is considered the food for the soul; it is considered as the ultimate key to anyone’s heart. It makes a person happy and brings back so many good memories. On the other hand, sometimes music can push a person in nostalgia, and bring back painful memories. No matter what, it becomes much easier to convey a message in the form of a musical tune. A person can easily convey their feelings and emotions to another person in the form of lyrics accompanied by various music and melodies. Some people take music as an escape from all the pain and worries of life. Music has always been important in every time period.

Music has seen a number of eras and has gone through multiple transformations. However, the most notable ones have been mentioned below:

* Medieval (c.1150 - c.1400)
* Renaissance (c.1400 - c.1600)
* Baroque (c.1600 - c.1750)
* Classical (c.1750 - c.1830)
* Early Romantic (c.1830 - c.1860)
* Late Romantic (c.1860 - c.1920)
* Post 'Great War' Years (c.1920 - Present)

**Discussion**

If there was a rule to measure the element of dissonance in every period, the listener could easily understand that from which era the music was coming from, but unfortunately, there is no empirical, defining characteristic between the music and the melodies of different periods, especialyy on a purely notational level. The differences between the music types and genres cannot be quantified and transformed in a shape of a data set, but they can surely be articulated by composers' treatment of harmonic dissonance, in a broader sense. Most of the musicians and composers distinguish the music of different eras on the basis of dissonance (Liu). There is a general trend from say 1400 to 1920 or so of allowing freer treatment of dissonance.  I bet you could train a Bayesian classifier using features like:

* frequency distribution of melodic intervals
* rhythmic position of dissonance
* frequency distribution of harmonic intervals or chord progressions.

Gregorian chant essentially avoids harmonic dissonance entirely: it's monophonic. Then, a listener can begin to hear a doubling of melodic pitch--first at the octave, then the perfect fifth and fourth: all perfect intervals (Mauch). Eventually 3rds and 6ths were 'allowed'--all consonances. Dissonance in early polyphonic music, say of Leonin and Perotin, is treated as passing tones between strong harmonic consonances. In the Renaissance and Baroque periods more dissonance was allowed, but still quite carefully controlled. The pattern of preparation (consonance) - suspension (dissonance) - resolution (consonance) governs much of the harmonic motion in the music of those times. Composers, gradually, introduced more and more dissonance (Grant). Composers explored and pushed the tension-and-release pattern mentioned above, pushing it beyond recognition.

By the time Wagner comes along, it was considered acceptable to start a piece of music (e.g., Tristan and Isolde) with a dissonant chord that barely fit within a tonal harmonic analysis. There were an obvious Schönberg and Co 'liberated' dissonance, making it equal with consonance. In short, the difference between periods and styles changed gradually from one composer to another, not always following a straight line, sometimes jumping way left the field, other times going way back in time. Late Mozart sounds almost baroque. Some mid-period Machaut sounds like music that wouldn't be written again for at least 600 years. Beethoven moved in a Romantic direction and then suddenly went back to a fairly classical style later in life.

However, this task is not simple. Musicians and composers cam across many tricky and confusing melodies as well. For example, Gesualdo (late 1500s/early 1600s) wrote music that used chromaticism that was uncharacteristic of his time and which would not be heard again for hundreds of years.  In addition to this, some modern composers intentionally at times took on a neo-classical style, e.g., many of Stravinsky's works and Prokofiev's "Classical" 1st Symphony.

**Conclusion**

Hence, it can be clearly seen that it has never been an easy task to distinguish between various kinds of music and compositions based merely on their melodies and genres. Many factors acted and still act in the composition of the music and from 1920 to the present day it is harder to distinguish classical styles by their treatment of dissonance, since the harmonic vocabulary is essentially wide open, anything goes, including atonal, tone clusters, and even microtones.

**Works Cited:**

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