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# The Musical Motif in Painting

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THE MUSICAL MOTIF IN PAINTING

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(TITLE)

BY

JERRY A. MARTIN

THESIS

SUBMITTED IN PARTIAL FULFILLMENT OF THE REQUIREMENTS  
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YEAR

I HEREBY RECOMMEND THIS THESIS BE ACCEPTED AS FULFILLING  
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## PREFACE

A correlation between art and the musical motif has been present within the arts throughout most of man's association with man. There is little doubt that from culture to culture and from one century to another, frequent changes of philosophical and religious concepts have been instrumental in changing the patterns of existing styles and, therefore, altering the approaches that man has used in reference to the musical motif. This changing pattern concerning music and art is the major purpose of this paper in showing a direct association between art and music of ancient times and my particular approach to the musical motif in painting.

## THE CLASSICAL HERITAGE FROM ANCIENT TIME

### Egyptian

Egyptian painting might well be described as primarily utilitarian, due to the "magical" order imposed upon it by its religious aim. This accounts for the emplacement of Egyptian wall paintings adorning the mortuary chapels which wealthy or important personages under the New Kingdom caused to be hollowed out in the rocky hills west of Thebes, the capital. In all, there are over four hundred of the "private" tombs, some carved, others painted, and now as accessible to the modern tourist as to the archaeologist. Since the tombs were regarded by the Egyptians as the dead men's future home, their walls were adorned not only with the most agreeable and varied scenes of earthly life but also with those of the life beyond the grave. It is true that gods, god-kings, and priests ruled and demanded strict obedience, that everyone believed the most important phase of existence came after death, yet, the Egyptian people did not allow this shadow of the after life to curtail their effectiveness as a being, as they were not only architects, sculptors, and craftsmen of genius, but also painters who were aware from the very beginning of



the role that color plays in a finished work. The wise man of this period made provisions for a carry-over of the normal pleasures of life to the infinitely longer term that was to prevail. This carry-over was not to be in the form of a house or palace, but in a tomb, constructed to last, to outwit time and destruction. The walls were covered with innumerable themes. However, the diversity of these themes were not as unusual as the use of scenes from life and death depicted side by side. It shows the prominent position that the here-after was to play in the welding of Egyptian society. Each tomb carving or painting had a definite purpose to serve, of which its chief use was to manifest the belief of man's continued life after his existence upon earth. The varied scenes of earthly life and the recorded lighter joys of living, when sealed up with the body, were intended not for propitiation of the gods, but as an assurance that the deceased might be eternally surrounded with the good foods, the flowers, and the arts to which he had been happily accustomed to on earth.

Confidence was radiantly displayed in the work of the Egyptian artists and artisans, not giving the slightest thought to the funeral aspect of the tombs themselves or to the concept of hell, but to the idea that paradise is

everywhere. Therefore, it can be said that all the scenes found in the tombs, varied as they are, reveal one and the same concern--that of a happy after-life.

From the earliest epoch to the end of the XVIIIth Dynasty, around 1400 B.C., the attempt was made to deceive fate by depicting life as a pleasurable affair and thus, by means of imitative magic, to achieve eternal felicity. From the XIXth Dynasty (1390 B.C.), on, the same purpose was achieved by the performance of religious rites and strict obedience of the divine decrees. Because of a philosophical change in the XIXth Dynasty, no doubt as a reaction against the exaggerated realism of the Amarnian period, secular scenes were discontinued as theme material, thus confining tomb decoration to religious and funerary themes. Both ideas are surely not incompatible, as they still emphasize the great dread of death felt by the Egyptian people in their attempts to assure a happy after life.

The musical motif, as used in the painting of this period, was to be a derivative of music's position in the Egyptian culture.

A modern archeologist has said that we know more about the details of the daily life in the Egypt of the fourteenth century B.C. than we do about those of England in the fourteenth century A.D. But such knowledge unfortunately

does not extend into the field of music. Basically there are two reasons for this: that the Egyptians interested themselves more in the arts of sculpture and architecture than they did music and secondly, that musical practices were largely in the hands of the priests, who regarded them as magical and sacred influences in the life of the people and hence is something to be carefully and secretly protected.<sup>1</sup>

Officially, music was recognized by the state and religious authorities and was considered an established art, one which played an important role in the life of its time and established its standing for centuries to come. There is some evidence that music was pursued for pleasure's sake, however, its predominant role was with the church and the dictates of the priests. It was thought to possess definite powers of magic resulting in an extensive use by priests in the make-up of religious services.

Music was both vocal and instrumental, employing the services of many types of instruments, among them lyres, harps (both these types were favorite instruments for accompanying the voice), flutes, drums, reed pipes, double as well as single, and later in a more decadent phase, trumpets, timbrels, and rattles. These musical instruments differed little from its use in the other civilizations of the Near East--Egyptian, Babylonian, Assyrian, Minoan,

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<sup>1</sup>Howard D. McKinney and W. R. Anderson, Music in History (New York: American Book Company, 1940), p. 40.

Dorian, Phoenician and Hebrew. The secular scenes that adorn the tomb wall quite often depict slave girls and dancers as they perform before banquets and gatherings of honor. The Egyptian painters, therefore, had very little opportunity to express themselves without adhering to the dictates of the church or to music's place in society.

Banquet scenes were often used as theme material as artists used music and dancing to enliven the occasion. The famous group of three women playing instruments--a flute, a mandola and a harp--in the tomb of Nakht, at Thebes (Figure 1) is a fine example of tomb painting from the XVIII Dynasty. The figures are quite elegant, well-proportioned and almost natural in appearance even though the artist governed himself by the typical Egyptian concept of the human figure. It is difficult to conceive a figure drawn with the Egyptian conventions of form--head in profile frontal view of shoulders and the typical three-quarters turn of the torso, that would achieve a successful composition. This rhythmic arrangement of graceful curves, procured from this stylized conception of the human figure does conform to the artist's aim of reproducing the different parts of the body as fully as possible, and is therefore quite successful. The Egyptians strived toward naturalism and definitely found line as a dominant factor over color.

Apart from black and white, the Egyptians used only four colors--red, yellow, blue and green--which of course could be mixed if desired. Browns and whites seem to be the dominant colors found in the three women musicians--the brown being derived from the mixture of blacks, red, and yellows, and the different tones of whites used as a discovery from overlapping coats of paint. The instruments used--the flute, mandola, and harp--are typically conceived and are depicted similarly throughout the Egyptian era.

In the tomb of Vizier Pektmire, a concert is the basic motif as two girls play the harp and lute. (Figure 2) Again, it is noticed that line is dominant over color; the line flows so gracefully that it looks almost like one continuous line. The conception of the harp differs somewhat from the harp depicted in the tomb of Nakht, and leads one to believe that there were variations in the construction of instruments, showing originality and differentiation with the inventive minds of the era. Seldom is there a deviation from the conventional pattern concerning the frontal view of the shoulders on a stationary figure, however, in this example, the harpist is shown from a straight side profile. Of course, if the artist was depicting the harp player in motion or as she played, then

Figure 1. Tomb of Nakht, Three Women Musicians

Figure 2. Tomb of Visier Pehmire, Girls Playing  
the Harp and Lute



it would conform again to their ideal, as quite often moving figures were drawn in this manner.

It is interesting to note the similarity between the musicians and instruments found in the tombs of Nakht and Vizier Pehmire. Although they were probably painted by different artists, there seems to be an elegance in the handling of form that is typical of all Pharaonic painters. It is as though all painters of the Egyptian period were to throw their concepts and ideas into a melting pot and stir before working in the tombs--the end result being a certain ingeniousness, a certain feeling for color, a certain skill in handling figures that is universal with them all.

Although the stylization changes somewhat through the many dynasties that make up the Egyptian period, the wall paintings are still one of our better records of the daily life of these people. Consequently, even though the emphasis during this period was that of a religious aspect, we still have a good accepted record of music and its impact upon the Pharaonic artists and people of this era.

#### The Greek Heritage

With the gradual expansion of the city-states, the leadership of which was strongly maintained by the Ionians on the western coast of Asia Minor and on the adjacent islands, trade became more general, wealth increased, and intellectual



interests became general. Man was no longer concerned only with his gods but began to take more interest in himself. Consequently art became more personal, expressive, emotional, and visual.<sup>2</sup>

This particular change of philosophical and economical expression was to be the front runner of the "golden age" of Greece that came to life in the fifth and sixth centuries B.C. Athens became the center of Greek culture and attracted money, scholars and artists from all over the known world. The use of music and dancing with the ever popular public festivals became common subjects for the artists. There was still some emphasis upon the religious aspect, yet we find that the Greek people loved to participate in and watch the dances and festivals of this period. Heyzinga,<sup>3</sup> a doctor and author, once referred to the Greek culture as a culture revolving around the "play" sphere; in other words, every element within the culture could fit into the "play" category. Therefore, if festivals and this element of play encompassed the whole of Greek culture, then indeed music was a very important part of the whole scene, and art would have played similarly an equal role.

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<sup>2</sup>Ibid., p. 72.

<sup>3</sup>A doctor-author who wrote many books based upon the play sphere in earlier cultures.

A study of Greek vase painting introduces us to many facets of Greek society over a period of almost a thousand years. It can be a mirror of the artistic activity, indeed, of the entire culture of ancient Greece. The pictorial representations on these vases are valuable sources for our knowledge of ancient life in the widest sense of the word, ranging from ordinary things, such as dress or the objects of daily use, to the understanding of Greek religion and mythology. Also equally as important are recorded details of domestic and public affairs and the depiction of theater and athletic contests. A whole new world is thereby opened to us.

Greek vase paintings are then, indeed, important documental evidence for the history of art and for the study of all Greek painting. Consequently, it is well to note their value in relationship to all Greek art, because these vase paintings are almost entirely all that is left to show for the art influences of their culture.

The musical motif in relationship to Greek vase painting was used quite extensively in many of the figure compositions. Even though there were a number of style changes throughout the centuries, the musical element was to be similarly used in all of Greek vase painting. The

playing of musical instruments was used as a heraldic device to exemplify the grandeur involved in those festivities of importance as in the Hoplites being played into battle, upper frieze on the Protocorinthian olpe (Chigi Vase), Rome; Hermes bringing the new-born Dionysus to the nymphs and Papposilenus at Nysa, Circa 440-435 B.C. by a Phiale painter; and Dionysus feasting with Hermes, satyrs, and menads, Lysippides painter, Circa 530-520 B.C., London (Figure 3).

There were a number of techniques used by Greek vase painters to obtain the originality that was desirable. Dionysus feasting with Hermes was painted during the black figure period, roughly around the 6th century B.C. The black figures were painted allowing the true clay color to show through as the background, which was usually red. This left a finished vase that was characteristic of the silhouette with very little color except as possible accents.

The Greeks were quite conscious of detail and tended to complicate their compositions with a greater knowledge of the anatomical makeup of the figures, the frills and folds in clothing, and they were becoming more aware of the tactual values in painting. The musical instruments used were still basically the same that were used by the Egyptians--the harp, lute, mandola and the pipes. The

harp seems to be the instrument that is subject to constant change as time continues to move through these ancient cultures. The Greeks modified the harp into a smaller, more portable type of an instrument, called a lyre. The lyre is not only smaller, but no less than six or seven new designs were depicted in the vase friezes. This change not only allowed artists to deal with new shapes in their compositions, but made the harp easily portable, doing away with stationary figures as harp players. They were now free to roam with the other figures, and to take their rightful place as heraldic devices in their culture.

The Greeks used a great many more themes of mythological origins than did the Egyptian people. Satyrs and menads were to be found everywhere in Greek composition as in Figure 4, Hermes and the Satyr Oreimachas, Circa 490 B.C., Berlin, and in Menad playing the flute, Karneia painter, Taranto (Figure 5). Notice the emphasis placed upon linear drawing. As in the Egyptian period, line was to dominate color throughout. There is a great deal of texture quality brought out in the menad's clothing through the use of line which is a different concept to be used. The Egyptians handled these areas as broad, solid planes and refrained from using textural devices to fill in these areas. The avlos is still depicted almost exactly as it was when the Egyptian artists

Figure 3. Lysippides Painter, Dionysus feasting  
with Hermes, Satyrs and Menads

Figure 4. Berlin Painter, Hermes and the Satyr  
Oreimachos



used them in their wall friezes.

There seems to have been a great deal of progress and general awareness on the part of the Greek people in their attempt to advance culturally. Their art is more individualized, more advanced, freer and less static than any of the ancient arts up to this time. This change is mostly due to the philosophical revolution that was the forerunner of the "golden age" of Greek culture, where man was no longer concerned only with his gods but began to grow concerned about himself as an individual. This led to an art that was more personal, expressive, emotional and visual.

The musical motif played a similar role in relationship to the Greek culture as did the same motif in relationship to other ancient cultures and their cave paintings--the heraldry and pagentry around important themes and those events of everyday life.

#### Etruscan-Roman Heritage

Etruscan art opens the first chapter into Italian painting. It is interesting to note that the pictorial geniuses of this period should be from an area in that selfsame part of Italy, around the Tiber and Arno, which fifteen centuries later would produce some of the most noble of pictorial achievements of the late Middle Ages. Etruscan painting is

Figure 5. Karneia Painter, Menad Playing the Flute





also important as the only source material pertaining to ancient large-scale paintings that is on record before the Roman period. This pertinent fact is due mainly to the nature of the monuments themselves. Except for a few rare exceptions, wall paintings were confined to the walls of sunken tombs dug into rock. It is unfortunate that mighty Rome, the conquerer of Greece and Egypt, the mistress of the Western world, should finally conquer the one and only remaining significant development of the Italian soil, the Etruscans, and reject their art contributions for those of Greek influence. Their emphasis in building Rome was so embellished in grandeur, that second rate Greek replacements dominated Roman art. Thus, a great surge of Etruscan art was left to die in its origin and be consumed by outside influences.

Etruscan art had a great deal of Oriental influence in its early stages, mostly due to emphasis by northern Italy on trade with eastern Europe. It was an art with monumental qualities, not lacking in grandeur or originality. Their paintings constantly aimed at concrete, spontaneous, detailed renderings of reality, thus having a great deal of documentary value which yields an insight into the mentality of the Etruscan people as well as a look into the civilization of ancient Italy.

It is only natural that Etruscan painters and decorators of the tombs were unable to completely break away from predominant tendencies of archaic art, and the precedence of oriental and Greek influences, hence the fact that, especially in earlier tomb paintings, we find many examples of oriental themes and Greek mythology. Also, the fact is that the basic function of tomb paintings was very similar to that of Greek and Egyptian painting and based on the belief that the spirit of the dead man survives in the world beyond the grave. Comfort and sustenance were essential to his well being. A later belief concerning life after death brought about some doubt in the third and fourth centuries B.C. as to man's position in the here-after and led to a greater use of living themes and more of a visionary concept of the other world.

Themes in general tended to lean in the same direction of prior archaic art--having to do with scenes of banqueting, music making and festival dancing, providing food and entertainment for the dead as well as pictures of daily life and evoking pleasant hours indoors, in the country or along the water. They were handled with a certain stylistic dignity, with formal composition and a skillful interplay of verticals and horizontals as can be noticed in the wall

paintings in the Tomb of Triclinium, Tarquinii (dated 470 B.C.). A youth is pictured walking with dancing steps toward his master's table playing the double pipes (Figure 6). The delicate simplicity of form and color is responsible for the charm of this painting. Again, we find the double pipes used as an entertaining device with little variation as to form or shape from the earliest record of this instrument. Also owing to the artist's pure handling of form, there is a transposition of a whole musical effect onto a pictorial plane--the artist's ability to successfully portray an emotional musical reaction for the first time, showing the far-ranging imaginative power that existed with the Etruscan artists. Colors were still quite subdued and form was to be handled simply with emphasis upon the sweeping movement of line and space.

The Etruscans and their art, consequently, became just one of many foreign elements that came together to form what we call today Roman painting. Etruscan characteristics were welded together with Greek and Oriental influences to develop an art quite unmonumental, lacking in emotional elegance and sometimes referred to as a dull form of hack work. This might be expected of a people where wall and panel painting were to be considered as routine ornamentation.

Their emphasis was on engineering--to construct only those monuments that best depicted their force, their motivation in personal ambitions, their pragmatic and realistic philosophy of life. Art is basically an expression of fine living. The Romans never seemed to reach that level of living that would allow an overflow into inspired expression. Therefore, we find an almost national betrayal, a negation of art found in field after field--painting, sculpture, metalwork and pottery.

Because of their basic painting processes, we do have a good record of the painting of this period which is found in painted panels, walls, platforms and vistas. Themes are still characteristic of those ancient archaic subjects, with a seemingly greater emphasis upon everyday life. This fact is dominantly portrayed in titles like: The Music Lesson (Triclinium); Teacher and Pupil (Triclinium); The Aldobrandini Wedding (Vatican City); Portrait of a Young Girl (Pompeii). Banquet scenes, themes requiring heraldy, and the depiction of mythology and gods at play were still popular with the Roman artists. It is still evident that musical instruments and the musical motive held a responsible position in the portrayal of great events. Their presence was electrifying and indispensable.

Pan Making Music With the Nymphs (Figure 7), found in Pompeii, is characteristic of the Roman use of the musical motif in relationship to mythology. The pipe that Pan plays has changed in form and style as compared to those of the earlier archaic periods, yet, the double-pipe held by the figure on the left is depicted as before. Variations in instrumental design do sometimes catch the eye as cultures tend to change and consequently, bring about changes in cultural achievements.

Color is still limited with subdued tones and values as the dominant color factor. A greater rendering of the figure seems to come into its own as the figure tends to take on a roundness of form.

The use of the musical motive was to decline in the early years of Christianity as did the art associated with the new Christian movement. The arts of this period were more closely related to manuscripts, mosaics and tapestries.

During the early days of the Church and the new Christian movement, the Church had little interest in art of any kind; for not only were many of the converts of the new faith drawn from the middle classes who were unused to artistic expression, but also in the minds of these members of the Church, art stood for everything to which the new faith was opposed. It was the symbol of a doomed

world--a world to which the early return of Christ would bring a merciful close.<sup>4</sup>

Therefore, for a number of years during the early portion of the Christian movement, music and art both were on the decline--at least within the Christian movement. Because of these factors, Byzantine art was essentially religious. The duty of the artist was to express in line and color those great truths which the clergy in spoken and written word were teaching their flocks. Music, therefore, as a motif, was used very seldom because of the art of the Byzantine world was under the auspices of the church and music was an integral part of pagan worship.

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<sup>4</sup>Howard McKinney and W. R. Anderson, Music in History (New York: American Book Company, 1940), p. 103.

Figure 6. Tomb of Triclinium, Youth Playing the  
Double Pipes

Figure 7. Pan Making Music With the Nymphs





## THE GLORY OF THE CLASSICAL STYLE OF THE RENAISSANCE

### Italian Renaissance

Many attempts have been made to analyze the causes of the great artistic movement we call the Classical Renaissance, which, as far as Italy is concerned, began in the fifteenth century. It is too often forgotten that these Quattrocento artists were indeed artisans with scant education and, therefore, any change in their art must have taken place for artistic reasons. Other causes, such as philosophical and economic reasons, were of secondary importance.

Renaissance art was an art with emphasis upon personal motif. One was beginning to look at himself as an individual, to take pride in personal achievement and to analyze his place in a working culture. Everyone was in a holiday mood, reflecting the gaiety and frivolity of the century. People were delighted with their own occupations, their whole lives. With the classical artist, there was prime concern with the humane side of life and the individual; the symbols of the culture and their religion were interwoven into one as a way of life. Since easel painting was to come later, the church still played an important role

in the employment of artists. Many were on salary and spent most of their lives dedicated to the depiction of Biblical stories and events of importance on the walls of the great churches of the period. They were not working for a restricted circle of connoisseurs now, but for the people of the world--and the whole world did see this work in churches and public edifices and took interest in them.

There are a number of contributing factors that bind together to form the real causes of the Renaissance. For one, the Italians of the fifteenth century, like their descendants of the twentieth, were quite responsive to all forms of physical beauty, whether it be a house, a flower, a human or an apple. This characteristic along with a strong local patriotism current at the time, exerted a profound influence upon the style and understanding of painting during this period. Therefore, this emphasis upon the beauty of the human form was essential to best display the glorious association between form and subject matter that existed in the Biblical stories of the time.

It is possibly unfair to signify the works of Giotto as the birth of the Renaissance period. As can be found with any other period of art, it is the combination of many contributing factors that bring about change in

movements of art. Artists such as Pietro Cavallini, Cimabue and Fra Angelico have possibly made contributions equally as important to the birth of this new movement, but Giotto's works were to leave only wonderment in the eyes of his contemporaries. For the first time, when compared to his predecessors, his painted figures became life-like. Giotto had more feeling for the human figure, breaking away from the linear, two-dimensional concept of the figure that dominated early archaic art and those less interesting eras that preceded this new birth. Giotto, more than ever before, had hit upon the secret of relief that was to dominate the early part of the Renaissance period. Consequently, the works of Giotto were to have a great deal of influence in constructing the framework of Renaissance painting.

There seem to have been two things added to Giotto's legacy--an increasing, passionate study of nature, particularly the human body, and a knowledge of the laws of perspective about which Brunelleschi and Massacio were to play a great part. Form became an aesthetic pleasure in painting--especially to the Florentine painters who placed emphasis upon relief.<sup>5</sup> Painters striving for relief must

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<sup>5</sup>Relief placed emphasis upon a greater desire to depict texture and the effects on textures of all surfaces. In this case, the true rendering of the human form would prevail.

to consciously what we do unconsciously, to construct the third dimension. And this could only be achieved by giving tactual values to retinal impressions. Therefore, tactual values took over a position of importance in painting. Color took a secondary role, with form acquiring monumentality. Again, as in early archaic art, color was dominated by another force. In recalling the ancient conception of form, the human line dominated color and was handled quite boldly, giving emphasis to simplicity with little movement. Now, color gave way to the academies of draftmanship, where modeling and relief were used to bestow grandeur and beauty to the human figure. Picturesque and variegated costume gave way to draperies with elaborately arranged folds. These new artists sought to give an idealized image of man, to confer nobility and dignity upon him, and at the same time to express all the subtlety of his feelings.

It is true that the Renaissance period was truly Italian as Italy continued to flourish with artists and great minds. The northern Renaissance is a term used to include those other nations struggling to keep alive in the arts. Flanders, Germany, Spain and France made lesser contributions to the worldly arts of this period although

each country did manage to produce at least one genius that kept the arts alive. Rembrandt, the Dutch artist, Durer in Germany and El Greco in Spain were indeed masters of their trade and made sizeable contributions toward the rebirth of art in their respective countries. The northern Renaissance areas were more concerned with color and the imaginative approach than were the Italians. To the Italians, who were interested in form alone based upon the academies of classical antiquity, color took a secondary role to draftsmanship until artists like Titian and Caravaggio restored color to its rightful place.

Before discussing the role that the musical motif played during the classical period, it is essential here that the basic philosophies behind some of the other great movements that made up the classical antiquity be discussed.

#### Romanticism

Classicism, with its passion for rules and academies pertaining to form and content, laid down the basis for the many movements to follow. Romanticism, a later aspect of the classics with its unbridled expression of the passions and its love of the exotic, was a derivative of these staunch rules. The musical motive can be readily noticed

as a working part of this new philosophy. The Romanticist enhanced the elegance of his work by adding the total effects of not only art but of music and poetry as well.

It was one of the Romanticism's prime ambitions to produce the 'total work of art,' that is, a work that should appeal simultaneously to all the intelligence. This vague conception of 'the work of art of the future' is common, in its different acceptations, to both Phillipp Otto Runge and Richard Wagner, for instance; it demands that everything should appeal to all the perceptions, should be accepted simultaneously as music, poetry and visual art. The voracious appetite for totality is in fact one of the essential elements of the Romantic spirit with its assumption that emotion is incomplete unless it is aroused by all the senses, even if, on occasion, it does not achieve its aim.<sup>6</sup>

It is interesting to note the extent that music is used to achieve this "total" effect that the Romanticist felt necessary. Even Shakespeare, who was the greatest inspiration of the Romantic painters and musicians, said, "The man that hath no music in himself...is fit for treasons, stratagems, and spoils...let no such man be trusted."<sup>7</sup> They were quick to understand this attitude and found in it the justification for their own sensibility.

The German Romantics had a feeling for interlinking poetic and musical elements with the picture element,

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<sup>6</sup>Maxwell Brion, Romantic Art (McGraw-Hill Book Company, Inc: New York-Toronto-London), p. 10.

<sup>7</sup>Ibid., p. 10.

indeed a much deeper approach containing secret qualities yet unknown to most art critics of the period. Their attention was still on how a picture was painted, not why-- a mistake that obscured the works' essential nature. Walter Pater also discovered this close association of music with the Romantic code. He discovered in Baroque and that part of the Renaissance which is already Baroque (Giorgione, for instance) one of the basic laws of the Romantic code, that the closer a work of art comes to music, the more perfect it becomes.

For the Romantics, the pictorial element never became an end in itself; the painter continued to appeal to those parts of the mind which are not stimulated only by the visual and tactual, but also by intense human feeling. The aim of the Romantic picture was to portray the human animal in his nostalgia, restlessness, and a confused mixture of aspirations and melancholy, and to mirror the emotions aroused in the spectator; it was to be poetry and music as well as painting, both in subject and treatment.<sup>8</sup>

Eugene Delacroix, a major painter of the Romantic movement of France, was also taken by the full effect that music played in painting.

There exists an impression which results from certain arrangements of colors, lights and shadows, etc. This is what might be

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<sup>8</sup>Ibid.



called the music of the picture. When you enter a cathedral and find yourself too far away from a painting to realize what it represents, you nonetheless are often gripped by this magic harmony.<sup>9</sup>

This conclusion by Delacroix is one that probably would not be disowned by today's abstractionists. The subject for him plays the part of an instrument in the orchestra, in which it blends, loses itself; all that matters is the sensation perceived by the eye.

Along these same lines, an article in the Arts Yearbook by Rene Huyghe, again spoke of the relationship of music and painting as used by the Romanticists.

And it leads to this: painting and art have a kinship with music. Just as all instruments blend in a symphony, so the subject, the drawing, the color, the light, even the brush stroke, and especially the composition, all merge distinctly, in their evocative impact to create a total impression. As with music, this impression must communicate the artist's imaginative flights, his most secret impulses, and the poetry hidden within his heart.<sup>10</sup>

In a sense then, the musical elements of painting were beginning to creep into their philosophies and their aspirations, as well as the instruments themselves being used as

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<sup>9</sup>Rene Huyghe, "Delacroix and Baughelaira," Arts Yearbook #2 (New York: The Art Digest, Inc., 1958), p. 44.

<sup>10</sup>Ibid.

devices for the enhancing of the humane side of life and for the symbolic magnification of feasts and banquets of honor. Music was now something more to painting than subject matter pertaining to incidents--a position that musical instruments held for sometime. Music was now emotional. It had impact upon the whole of painting, bringing out a certain subjectivity lacking in many earlier works.

### Baroque

Seventeenth century Baroque painting was another derivative of the classical period. It was not until the late nineteenth century that historians finally recognized the merits of this movement. Until this time, it was thought of as a poor attempt to return to the classical academies that persisted during the Renaissance period--an art that was considered grotesque, over-elaborate, peculiar and, in short, not worthy of admiration. Today, Baroque has lost its derogatory meaning, and in its new definition, serves to classify the art of this period into two phases. First, it serves as a generic term for European art in the phase when it stopped imitating classical antiquity. This art was to give less emphasis to those elements pertaining to classical sculpture which was primarily the only statuary known to the Renaissance. Secondly, the term "Baroque" indicates a state of mind.

The seventeenth century Baroque could also be called a "Great Century" in European painting. If a man were to have traveled around Europe in the middle of the century, he would have met great artists everywhere: Rubens in Antwerp, Rembrandt in Amsterdam, Louis Le Nain in Paris, Poussin in Rome, and Velazquez in Madrid. All of these artists, now considered masters in their own right, contributed great works using musical themes to the seventeenth century European painting.

Much of Baroque art is still to be considered very busy, with a lot of unnecessary frills and ornamentation. Still, it is a great period for color with the human form gaining a great deal of monumentality. There are many art critics today who feel Baroque art is based upon the great feeling for the diagonal, instead of horizontal or vertical. Rubens, they point out, is quite characteristic of this train of thought, with his curved lines, diagonal emphasis and opulent, wavering forms. Others feel that perhaps Caravaggio's streaked lighting had some influence. Perhaps even the piling up of forms by the Caracci were of influential consequences. It is well to remember that a combination of all of these human contributions probably fused together to form the art of the Baroque period.

The classical artists in general not only those quattrocento artists of the early Renaissance, but those artists through the Baroque period, used the musical motif quite extensively. Many of their compositions were formed around basic theme material containing the musical elements and their monumental feeling for movement. This change was responsible for bringing the musical motif into a more prominent position than in preceding times. It is best to speak of the use of music in classical painting categorically, breaking down into basic themes the work of the classical artists.

Angels and Nymphs Playing Instruments  
at the Base of the Holy Throne

The themes that were to be used by the classical artists varied quite extensively in form and approach. One of the most popular themes has been the sacred symbol of angels and nymphs playing an instrument at the foot of the holy throne. Usually a guitar or mandolin was used; however, violins, lutes and horns were often introduced. This particular form tended to form a triangle with the Madonna as the apex and the angels as balance points for the composition. The whole of the composition was a symbol of

eternal joy in the birth of Christ and the everlasting life and happiness in the joyous event. Some artists of this period depicted the playing angel scene as a standard supplement of the Holy Family or Madonna and Child Enthroned.

A detailed portion of the altarpiece by Andrea Orcagna, Christ Enthroned, Surrounded by Angels, With the Virgin and Seven Saints (Figure 8) at Santa Maria Novella in Florence, shows an angel playing a horn rather than the typical guitar or mandolin. In the Madonna With Six Saints, by the Venetian artist, Aloise Vivarini, the dominating instrument is also the horn, although both artists still stick very closely to the triad formed by Madonna and angels.

Stringed instruments were extremely popular as thematic objects since lutes, mandolins and violins presented a more pleasing sound that best fit the occasion. A detail from Carpaccio's, The Presentation in the Temple, gives us a good close-up view of the angel playing the lute (Figure 9). It is almost impossible, while taking note of the instruments used, to avoid looking at the beautifully painted folds in the angels' clothing. Such emphasis was another method of better depicting the human form as alive and beautiful--to better achieve the strong construction that was typical of Renaissance art. Both examples follow the same disciplinary

Figure 8. Andrea Orcagna, Christ Enthroned Surrounded  
by Angels With the Virgin and Seven Saints

Figure 9. Carpaccio, The Presentation in the Temple



pattern of the Classic style with emphasis upon a very strong structural sense, the illusion of depth and dimension, and the awareness of relief by the contrasting usage of light and shadow to endow the forms with lasting beauty. The very elaborately arranged folds of the drapings, the enormous amount of ornamentation, the subtle use of light, the high arch overhanging the throne with its countless use of moldings and busy work, all add to the characteristics found in the depiction of the holy throne. Other examples of angels playing instruments at the base of the throne are noted in Appendix I.

#### Mythological Gods or Nymphs used in Heraldry

Often mythological gods or nymphs were used in heraldry, to add grandeur and good tidings to those events that were of special interest or symbolic of personal achievement. The Coronation of the Virgin (Figure 10) by Fra Angelico, a Florentine painter, is a very good example of the use of horns to magnify an event of great importance. Four horns on each side of the coronation and an angel in front with a harp make up the musical components of this composition. There seems to be a certain sublimity, a certain eloquence about this picture that portrays all the magnificence of



the occasion. Other examples of the use of instruments for heraldry can be found in Carpaccio's St. Ursula and the Prince Taking Leave of their Parents; Saint Martin Being Knighted by Simone Martini; The Virgin Bridal Procession, a fresco by Giotto; Piero Della Francesca's The Nativity (Figure 11), a scene exemplifying the birth of Christ that distinctly shows the clarity, the assurance, the supreme composure that was such an outstanding characteristic of Francesca. An English critic, R. N. D. Wilson once wrote in speaking of the Nativity that it seemed to evoke a feeling of suspended action, a pause in the drama, infinitely solemn, in which the participants become mysterious spectators of the scene they are enacting.<sup>11</sup>

There are a number of occasions where angels were used instead of saints in assuming the duties of heraldry, as in The Angel (Figure 12) by Melozzo da Forlì, and a picture by the same name by Luca Signorelli.

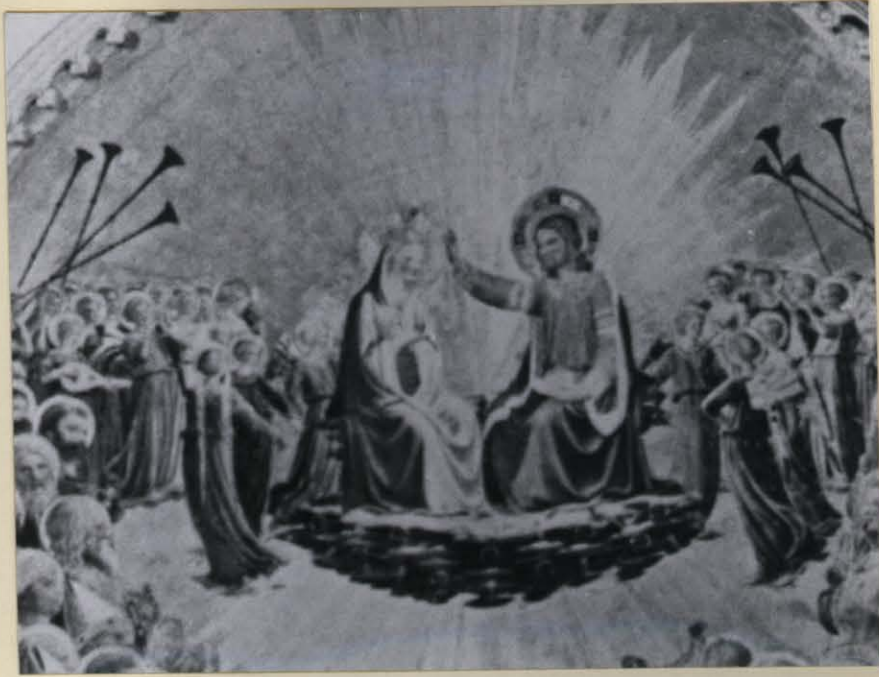
Another favorite theme of the classical painters evolved around the use of gods and goddesses in various musical scenes depicting serenity, scenes of passion, or

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<sup>11</sup>Quote by R. N. D. Wilson is from a magazine article of which its true origin is unknown.

Figure 10. Fra Angelico, The Coronation of the Virgin

Figure 11. Piero Della Francesca, The Nativity



symbolic representations of the horrors that accompany bad tidings, in the form of heraldry, such as in Ruben's Allegory of War (Figure 13). It has been said that modern interpreters read too much into old paintings, and it might do well to have these people read what Rubens had to say about his own work--his famous Allegory of War and the part that musical elements and gods played in its final composition.

The principle figure is Mars who has left the Temple of Janus open (which according to Roman custom remained closed in time of peace) and struts with his shield and his blood-stained sword threatening all peoples with disaster; he pays little attention to Venus, his lady, who, surrounded by her little love-gods, tries in vain to hold him back with caresses and embraces. On the opposite side, Mars is pulled forward by the Fury Alecto with a torch in her hand. There are also monsters signifying plague and famine, the inseparable companions of war. Thrown to the ground is a woman with a broken lute, as a symbol that harmony cannot exist beside the discord of war; likewise a mother with a child in her arms indicates that fertility, procreation, and tenderness are opposed by war, which breaks into and destroys everything.<sup>12</sup>

Other examples of gods or nymphs as heralds of good or bad tidings which can be studied with interest are noted in Appendix II.

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<sup>12</sup>Julius S. Held, Peter Paul Rubens (New York: Harry N. Abrams, Inc., 1953), p. 22.

Figure 12. Melozzo da Forlì, The Angel

Figure 13. Rubens, Allegory of War



### The Musical Saints

Pan or Apollo, the mythical gods of music carried over from the pagan era, and St. Cecilia, the patron saint of music portrayed in the Christian Church, were often used as subjects of interest either alone or as principal subjects of feasts and festivals. Luca Signorelli and Pietro Perugino were two Italian Renaissance painters who used Pan or Apollo as subject matter. Their works, both named Apollo and Marsyas, portrayed their subjects as lovers of peace and serenity. Note in the picture by Perugino (Figure 14), the use of the doves of peace, the lyre at rest against a stump, and the look of contentment upon the faces of Apollo and Marsyas as Marsyas plays the flute. The instruments are forever present, symbolically representing music's high stature in human life and endeavor.

Domenichino, in Figure 15, has used the patron St. Cecilia as his subject. Alone, with the help of a nymph as a music holder, Cecilia lifts music with joy and pride to the exalted level and the high intensity of which her position dictates. The instrument, a viol, is much larger than is usually used during this period of classical art. Therefore, it is quite unique and is an excellent example of the artist exalting St. Cecilia to her position on high.

Nicolas Poussin, one of the greatest of French classical

painters, painted "The Inspiration of the Poet" (Figure 16) inspired from the mythology of antiquity.

Apollo, the young and beautiful god and the protector of the arts, inspires a poet who has withdrawn from the world. The poet listens to his promptings and to the inspiration of the god, in order to write a song that will make him immortal, as suggested by the laurel wreath held over his head by the putto. At the side of these figures, who gave the appearance of a group held together by an inner bond, stands Euterpe, the muse of song. She holds in her right hand the flute on which she has been accompanying Apollo's performance on the lyre. She too is drawn into the circle of inspiration and she too has a part in the immortal song which is transmitted to the poet from the god as the laurel wreath in the hand of the putto in front of her indicates.<sup>13</sup>

The wonderful composition and the harmonious serenity of this group is further augmented by the fine pitch of the delicate color harmony. Form and color are completely compatible, equal in emphasis and produce in the beholder a most effective aesthetic impression.

Poussin was one of the greatest of French classical painters. He exercised those principles of pictorial composition to which any of his immediate contemporaries had access with an integrity and passion that left him

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<sup>13</sup>Dr. Hiltgart Keller and Dr. Bodo Gichy, Twenty Centuries of Great European Painting (New York: Sterling Publishing Co., Inc., 1957), p. 123.



Figure 14. Perugino, Apollo and Marsyas

Figure 15. Domenichino, St. Cecilia



survived by all. For Poussin, formal order was a way of expressing with absolute clarity the profoundest intellectual, imaginative and visual experiences related to reality. His paintings perhaps find their closest counterpart in the Baroque music of Johann Sebastian Bach, and the more explicit classicism of a Beethoven or a Delacroix should not qualify them for judgement. Other examples of the use of musical saints are noted in Appendix III.

#### Feasts and Festivals

Feasts and festivals were often used as themes in order to record the mere assemblage of people, with emphasis upon their many decorative costumes and the atmosphere of the occasion. Although thought is often slow to invade the many cities, fashion is not. The Venetians were far enough removed from simplicity to appreciate to the full the singularly happy combination of ceremony and splendor that was part of Paolo Veronese and other classical artists of this period. In the "Feast at Cana" by Veronese (Figure 17), his cheerfulness, his joyous worldliness and in short his frank qualities were well accepted by his employers. It is indeed interesting to note that the major portion of his employment was in connection with the monasteries and shows how thorough the spirit of the Renaissance had

Figure 16. Nicolas Poussin, The Inspiration of the Poet

Figure 17. Veronese, Feast at Cana (Detail)



permeated when religious orders gave up their pretense to piety. This relaxing of the Church's attitude was to lead itself to the acceptance and greater use of feasts and festivals as a means of entertainment. Therefore, music and the play sphere in general, which often go hand in hand, became more prominent as theme material for those partisans closely related to the arts. Feasts and festivals were excellent subject matter, as artists could not only capture the gaiety and rapture of the occasions but could equally as well record for history the feeling of the period. This in itself helped historians to determine the popular costumes of the day as well as the extent that music played in society functions. Other examples of the use of musical instruments as a motif in festive occasions can be found in Appendix IV.

#### The Concert

The use of the concert as a theme subject has also been excitingly used by the classical artists. It represented the good life, the culture and human side of the people in times of feasts and pleasures. The concert theme tends to parallel that of the feasts and festivals for quite often they were the same. The range of artistic conception relating to concert themes changed often as artists shifted their subject matter to fit their compositions. This brought

about constant variations pertaining to the number of musicians used, the approach used to the subject matter, i.e., either mythology or reality, and the settings used for background material.

Of all the great masters that come to mind in relationship to the concert theme, Giorgione would have to be considered one of the greatest. He was not only one of the great masters of the Italian Renaissance period but he possessed a certain shadowy subtlety in his work that was unique. In Giorgione's Country Feast and The Concert (Figure 18), his truly great contributions to the field of art are evident.

The use of single musicians as theme material could be placed in this category as well, for often they were depicted in various stages of performing. Northern Renaissance painters such as Rembrandt, Durer and Hals painted a number of paintings dealing with the single musician and similar subject matter. The Singing Boys (Figure 19) by Frans Hals is a monumental example of the typical Northern Renaissance approach to the single musician. He captures the grandiose sureness, the keen presentation of personality and the almost instantaneous reflections of color and sound that are the real essence of this work. His figures are so convincing, his approach so direct, that his pictorial atmosphere seems to dance with this direct usage of light and color, Hals is

second only to Rubens in his use of color and his sparkling manner of presentation.

Watteau, the late seventeenth century and early eighteenth century Romanticist, has contributed a number of works with the playing of music as a basic theme. It is difficult to classify Watteau because of his ability to adjust to the mood of a subject; like Giorgione, he had a fleeting and melancholy sense of the transitoriness of all pleasures and all life. Concert Champere, Just a Family Concert, The Banjo Player (Figure 20), The Guitarist, La Finette, The Charlatan, The Music Lesson and The Game of Love, all exemplify the strong regard that Watteau had for the musical instrument in composition. Other examples of the concert theme are noted in Appendix V.

#### Instruments as Still-Life Material

The use of instruments as still life material was not yet popular, for the emphasis was still upon the human being and his place in the cultural festivities that made up the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries. There were a few painters that did pursue this form of painting, however, such as the seventeenth century Italian painter Baschenis.

He took a passionate delight in the beauty of the



Figure 18. Giorgione, The Concert

Figure 19. Frans Hals, The Singing Boys



instruments; he painted them again and again, weaving their rich curves into his compositions with unflinching zest, diversifying the pattern now and then with motifs of fruit and colored ribbons as in his Mandolin and Still Life (Figure 21). Baschenis was taken by the effects of texture--the different kinds of wood used in the instruments and the rich lustrous surfaces of drapery. Except for his choice of objects, many of Baschenis's still-life paintings resemble the works of the nineteenth century classical realists of Harnett and Peto as well as the works of Aron Bohrod of the twentieth century. Like Baschenis, those nineteenth century classicists used design of super realism based upon the strong classical principles of painting. A very strong sense of construction with emphasis upon dimension and relief characterised this style.

Figure 20. Watteau, The Banjo Players

Figure 21. Baschenis, Mandolin and Still Life



### CONTEMPORARY ART AND THE MUSICAL MOTIF

The course of contemporary art has been diverted into many directions and channels, most of them derivatives of prior styles and influences that preceded our times. It is a natural phenomenon to expect movements in the art world to draw parallels with those movements, as well as to reflect the intellectual and emotional extremes of the international scene. Consequently, we find in contemporary art many differing approaches used to express the feelings left undefined.

The invention of the camera and the consequent boredom of artists with "nature," new discoveries in the sciences, the influence of the machine age and the parallel of music, have all been used by way of explanation and argument to define this great impulse toward the abstraction. This close association between music and art is partly responsible for the lean toward subjectivity--an art more abstract because it tends to play upon one's emotions rather than the visual image. This greater emphasis upon music's emotional impact is therefore accountable for the continual prominence of music as a motif in painting. The twentieth century was also in need of a universal language. Due to growing numbers of scientific achievements, the world was

becoming more united in thought, commerce, and numerous other activities which made it impossible for any nation to continue to overlook its neighbor. Many contemporary artists used this urge toward a universal language. It led them to an abstract use of color and rhythm as a replacement for subject matter whose reference was limited to the local and national scene. They saw in music a justification for abstract painting--probably because the music of the nineteenth century was perhaps the most universally emotional language of that century. Even though the one art deals in intervals of time, the other in intervals of space and our nervous systems tend to act differently toward auditory and visual rhythms, many artists, such as Kandinsky, used this idea to justify their emotional appeal to the mass public. This is also a significant change--a reversal of the artist's position who painted for the picture's sake itself and paid little heed to the unsympathetic public.

Throughout all of the abstract movements that evolved, there was one common motivating factor that led each movement toward higher goals--protest. Protests against the established order of traditional perspective, conventional subject matter and the naturalistic use of space and color

were common grounds for the establishment of splinter revolutionary factions. Often these small movements caught on well enough to form extreme counter-revolutionary movements that were characteristic of our larger painting movements today. These protests are not necessarily mere rebellion against an immediately preceding style, but are often a culmination of many revolutionary actions--religious, social, economic or artistic--that leave build-up or a residue of points as fusing agents.

During the latter part of the nineteenth century and early twentieth century, three schools of thought were dominant enough in painting to make a lasting impression--Impressionism, Cubism, and early American Classical. All three schools were able to mold the structure of painting, to eventually produce derivatives of these movements sufficiently influential in nature to withstand the pressures of our time and become the basis of contemporary painting as we know it today. The majority of our modern movements in painting are related closely to elements of past thought, such as the close relationship of the early French Impressionists and the Futurist movement.

### The Impressionists

The Impressionist school of painting came into being



during the latter portion of the nineteenth century and probably should be considered one of the greatest eras of painting ever produced in France. Although the leading pioneer of the Impressionist school was Manet, Monet, Pissarro and Sisley are known as the true founders of this movement. Impressionism was responsible for the rejuvenation of landscape painting, for it was with this subject matter that the true Impressionistic effects could be rendered.

The followers of Impressionism were more concerned with color and became more detached from the personal in their search for design and the illusion of open air. This emphasis placed upon the effects of light in air was responsible for a decline in the use of the musical motif as compared to landscape painting. The artists were too enthralled by the reflections of light on nature's forms to seriously pursue musical elements as theme material. The musical instrument, as in the Cubist school of the early twentieth century, became more of a decorative motif than a symbol.

The Frenchman, Raoul Dufy, has a style that is characteristic of the Impressionists. He worked in a sub-Impressionist manner until 1905, when the impact of the Fauve movement

(particularly of Matisse's work) impelled him to adopt simplified form and bright color. The Fauves achieved their identity because of the wildness of style and their non-representational use of color. Dufy used the musical motif often as can be seen in his Sunday Band Concert, The Yellow Violin, The Opera, Homage to Mozart and his Music. Although Dufy is sub-Impressionistic in technique, he draws all of the rigors of the twentieth century into his styling that almost offsets his Impressionistic qualities. In La Symphonie (Figure 22), the dynamic tensions of fast moving society are evident. His swift use of strokes, cluttered composition, his strong erratic outlines are enough to show how society often makes slaves of our emotions. His interpretation of the orchestra is more violent than one would suspect. Yet, he is abiding by many of the Impressionistic concepts that define their purpose--the depiction of light and its effects upon subject matter.

There were a number of artists that broke away from the Impressionists, keeping many of their basic characteristics and adding new experiments or ideas of their own. This group of revisionists were called Neo-Impressionists. Georges Seurat, the Divisionist, along with Signac and Pissaro pursued a technique that they thought would produce the

Figure 22. Raoul Dufy, La Symphonie

Figure 23. Seurat, The Parade



maximum of luminosity in their work--a technique that evolved around the optical mixture of pure pigments separating the color of light from the local color and the interactions of each. In Seurat's The Parade (Figure 23), the technique is almost as easily recognizable as his use of the musical motif. The center of compositional interest is his quite subtle association of the trombone player and parade leader. The usual vibrant, almost overpowering colors that often follow this theme have been replaced with a quality, extremely poetic in nature. An interaction between light reflections and light rays nearly blot out the existence of the other two musicians behind the trombone player, making evident the power that Seurat often used to achieve his effects of light. Other examples of the musical motif as used by the Impressionists and their contemporaries are noted in Appendix VI.

#### Early American Classical Period

The Renaissance painters, in order to capture the effect of things existing in space, were instrumental in developing the peep show, a device constructed with the use of mirrors, etc., that achieved the closest approximation to a three-dimensional representation of space. Later,

The stereoscope was invented to accomplish the same means.

Painters began to imitate these effects, and the result was a new school of painting called "trompe l'oeil"-- "deceive the eye". The followers of this school, the school now, dubbed today as "Magic Realism", flourished during the Baroque period but died out around 1800 in Europe. However, in America it survived as an undercurrent during the nineteenth century. The American mind was fertile during this period for an art halfway between the optical and the miraculous and, therefore, was the forerunner of the classical revival that took place in America.

The classical revival of the nineteenth and twentieth centuries excelled with the still life paintings of artists such as William M. Harnett, Aran Bohrod, Peto and others. The fool-the-eye type of painting capitalized on using ordinary everyday objects to form designs of super realism based upon the classical principles in paintings. The strong construction of form was paralleled with the principle of the cubist school, and often the cubist style seems derivative of this type of painting where dimension was to become a big factor.

The musical motif or musical instrument became a very important subject for Harnett and many of the still life

painters of this period. Harnett tended to shun real life and preferred to project his own life into dead things. Another factor was the shifting of emphasis from the classical whims of structure and composition to those objects that were of textural interest. The painting of textures, therefore, became a driving force that never left Harnett, and the word perfection could best be used in describing his abilities.

Musical instruments were used often by Harnett in planning his still life arrangements. Old bent-up bugles and violins were items of textural interest to him for he repeated their use often. He painted a number of paintings using a quite old and weathered door with huge rusty hinges as a background for enhancing the character of his paintings. In front of the door, he arranged his objects in a paradoxical way, so as to make us wonder whether he really is fascinated more by them or by the unknown things hidden behind the door.

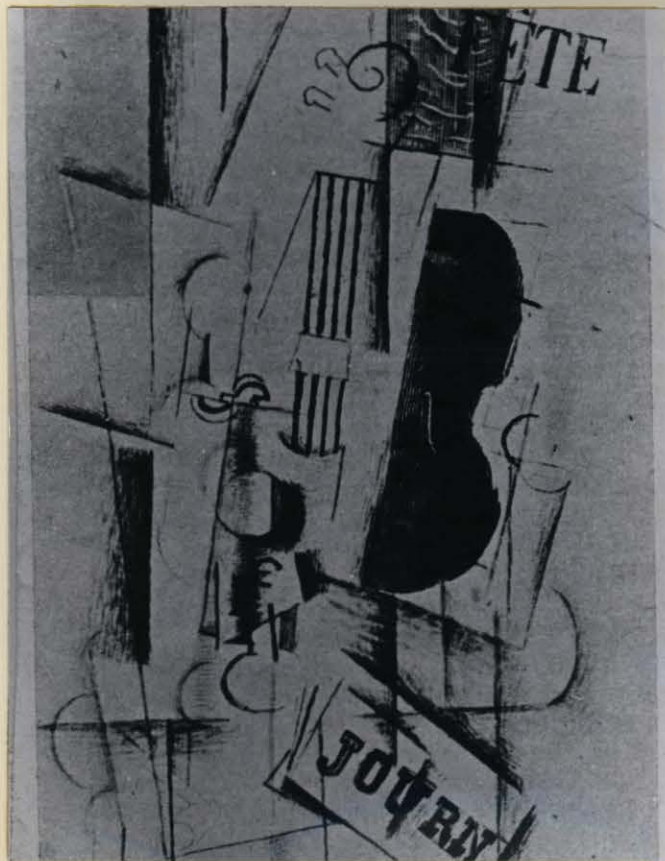
Although the emphasis upon form was more geometrically conceived by the cubists, it is interesting to note the resemblance of the still lifes of this period and their influences upon the cubistic movement which was to follow.

In the "Old Cupboard Door" (Figure 24) by Harnett, it is quite easy to note the painstaking effort placed into the precise representation of texture upon texture. The

Figure 24. Harnett, Old Cupboard Door

Figure 25. Georges Braque, Musical Forms





angular and flowing shapes of the instruments in relationship to the vase are characteristic of his unique choice of objects and their handling that almost leaves a brooding quality to his works.

A comparison of Harnett's Old Cupboard Door to many of the cubist compositions tends to reveal a similar approach to composition and content. Georges Braque's Musical Forms (Figure 25) is but one of the many examples that show this close relationship. At a glance one seems to almost visualize the same picture; the use of angular planes, the use of sheet music and wording as part of the musical motif, and the instruments themselves. Both paintings have a unique rhythmic pattern.

The Mandolin is another excellent example of the musical instrument used by Harnett and the early American Classicists. Composition is handled very simply. It looks almost as though Harnett, like the cubists, tended to slight the overpowering emphasis upon texture that so haunted him and turns to the geometric shape as the point of focal interest. The mandolin has many areas depicted that were carry-overs to the cubist movement, where the textured approach seems to have been slighted when compared to the violin in the Old Cupboard Door.

The classical revival of early twentieth century America was, therefore, more or less responsible for laying the framework of those schools of painting to follow that dealt with objectivity. The return to the Classical tradition kindled a fire that has continued to smoulder through this period. There is little doubt that it will continue to do so, since this form of realism is still encouraged and accepted by the public in general. These traditional elements can be found in magazine illustrations.

### Cubism

It is inevitable that, when speaking of the musical motif in painting, more attention is given to cubism. Cubism, like most twentieth century art, stemmed from a new way of seeing, not from a new interpretation of reality. It was a definite shift from an ocular experience to the creative act. Although this form of art is essentially subjective, it allows painters to create a more acute reality and prove that many times intuition is a surer guide than knowledge or observation. Painting is neither, then, a replica nor a symbol of reality, but has a life of its own in a precarious fluctuating balance between the two extremes of realism and symbolism.

The Cubists set out to break down forms into their elements and then to reassemble them in an arbitrary way, ignoring how they appear to our eyes or how we imagine them, aiming at the creation of works capable of standing as "pictorial objects" in their own right. Conformably, the Cubists refused either to follow the rules of perspective or to reproduce colors as they appear in three-dimensional space and light. Most colors were to be reduced and restricted to subdued tones of grays, browns, ochres and dull greens.

The Cubist's subject matter was greatly responsible for the 'close association between music and art'. This close association was not restricted to subject matter alone. Many of the working processes, pertaining to the building and constructing of composition, draw close parallels to the practices of composers.

This theory is best associated to the works of Georges Braque, one of the founders of the Cubist movement along with Picasso. Like a composer of fugues, Braque begins by inventing and stating a leading theme and then follows this theme in developing an answer. It is evident that Braque had his approach deeply imbedded in his mind between the years of 1910 and 1914 as can be observed by noticing the names that were given to his works of this period. Full

Score, Aria, and Bach, who was his favorite composer.

His taste for music reveals itself particularly in his selection of the thematic material. Quite often his theme takes on the form of a musical instrument and other objects (notes of music, the performer) figuring on different planes provide the answer. His colors, ranging from an ochre to a greyish-blue provide the modulations. Braque's choice of instruments such as violins, mandolins and guitars, and the brown and red-brown hues of their bodies must be credited to his association with this musical style that has been so much a part of his work.

Although the Cubists did extensive research relating to the still life, they never divorced themselves completely from the sentimental, even romantic, implications of their chosen subject matter. Studio paraphernalia, musical instruments, the guitar, mandolin and violin and those characters quite often associated with such instruments such as the Harlequin, Columbine and Pierrot were constantly associated with their compositions. This close, constant involvement of music and painting suggests that music, more than in any other school of thought, tended to mold and control the destiny of Cubism. It was as though the artists were hypnotically entranced by the problem of finding

music's position in their Cubist's philosophy. Of course, part of music's position can be credited to the fact that the curved and round forms of musical instruments lent themselves well to the Cubistic forms. The round and curved shapes made admirable counter-subjects to the Cubistic pattern of rectangular and translucent planes.

The fact that modern art reaches back to the basic elements of the painter's craft, those of line, space, planes and color, drew a close parallel to those basic fundamentals found in music and set it free from representational service. Having learned to appraise a picture in terms of formal structure and not in terms of its meaning and content, future generations will no longer need to fall back upon musical analogies, since the eye by then will have been as well trained as the ear.

Cubism, therefore, not only used instruments for design purposes but delved into the inner most working qualities of those instruments--their effect upon composition, the influence of sound upon individual reaction, also the extent to which musical elements lent themselves to the Cubistic ideas. The Cubists were concerned with these qualities only in a static relationship, however, which is a characteristic that distinguishes their ideas from other modern movements

such as the Futurists or the action painters of the Expressionist period.

Pablo Picasso, probably the greatest Spanish artistic genius of the twentieth century, sums up his cubistic ideas best in a painting called the Three Musicians (Figure 26). When the painting is analyzed for subject matter and content, it reveals a humorous summation of Cubism in a half-joking manner. A harlequin with a horn, a Pierrot with guitar and a monk with veil and sheet music sit over a prone dog and sing out from what appears to be a very shallow closet or enclosure. With subject matter such as this, it is difficult to conceive that one man could construct a composition of international merit. Yet, Picasso has achieved this result as well as successfully putting into play all of the Cubistic ideals.

The instruments, a horn and guitar, have been reduced to their simplest form--a form that can be construed to fit his composition and design. There are some transformations pertaining to design that Picasso, as well as the other Cubist painters felt necessary before some elements could be used as subject matter. The number of strings of the mandolin and guitar were often misrepresented conforming to the general, though hardly unbroken, rule in most Cubistic representations of stringed instruments. Thus, the

six strings of a guitar are usually reduced to four or five, and the four strings of a mandolin to three. In the Three Musicians, Picasso deviated again from this rule as he represented a guitar with just three strings. His deviation of string thickness as well as the distance between each adds to the many variations brought into his play of design. Similarly, the five lines of the music staff are almost invariably transformed to three or four. In Picasso's painting, the three lines of the staff have been ably used against a white background. This adds a very heavy contrasting area in the right center of the composition that helps to liven the dark somber colors of the monk's clothing design. Therefore, the elements of design have twisted and revised the musical motif to create a new form of reality.

In Georges Braque's The Mantlepiece (Figure 27), a guitar is used as a still-life material. Often, the Cubists relied upon the guitar and mandolin because these shapes can be modeled and revised to fit almost any composition. The extremely irregular shape given to the instrument in this example fits well with the remainder of the structure. In this case, Braque has used a heavy textural effect that centers along a plane in the upper left and across the center of the picture. The solid plane of the instrument tends to offset this busy feeling adding more character to



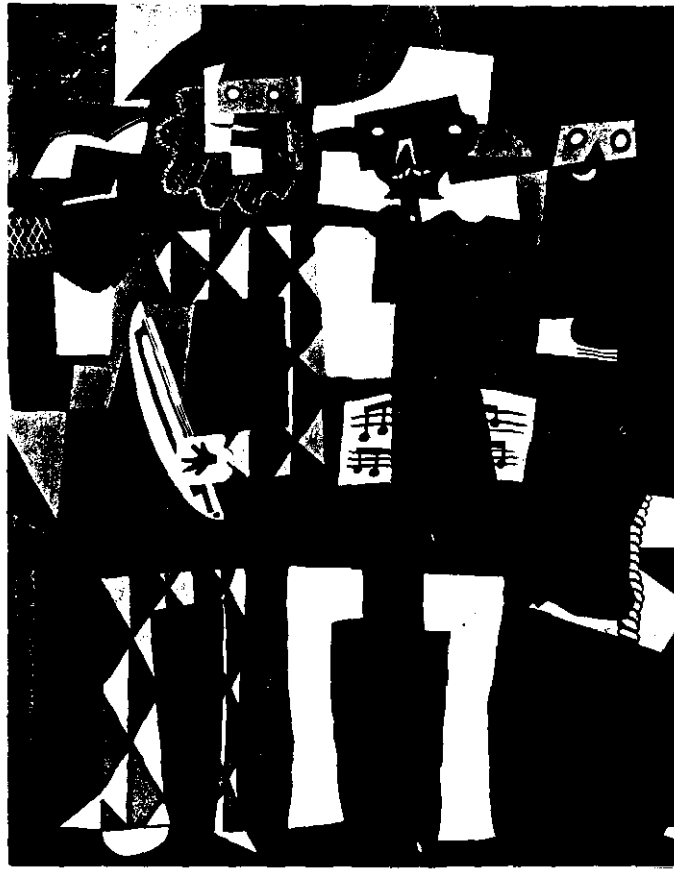
those pieces in compositional splendor. The Mantlepiece is an example of the later phase of the Cubist movement. Braque and Picasso began to place more emphasis upon the textural effect instead of sticking steadfastly with the simplified form concept. This is one unique feature of this movement and its founders. They were constantly in a process of experiment and change that brought about many alterations in style and approach before the movement finally lost its impact. Of course, many of the Cubists' ideals still persist. Today, however, Picasso, one of the original founders, pursued another direction of interest, leaving Cubism as a past area of exploration.

Two other Cubist painters who also made important contributions should be mentioned: Juan Gris, a Spanish artist who worked in France, and Fernand Leger, also from France. Although their styles differed somewhat, Gris, with his emphasis upon a preconceived design and Leger, with his very personal style inspired by the machine, both expressed the Cubist spirit with the poise and grace of true masters.

It would be fruitless to attempt to list and name other examples of the musical motif in Cubism. For approximately ten or so years, almost every painting finished by the Cubist artists pertained to music in some way or another.

Figure 26. Pablo Picasso, Three Musicians

Figure 27. Georges Braque, The Mantlepiece



This fact alone is instrumental in determining the degree of importance that the musical motif played in their philosophy of painting. Any further reference to music's position in this movement could be directed to the Cubist movement in general for additional information.

Within the humanist tradition, man was the explorer of the world which could be explained or clarified by the means of investigation. From the Renaissance through the nineteenth century, man's ability to understand the world was reflected in his art. The images that he created were reflections of his perceptual world--of the world that he perceived. To this extent, the tradition culminated in nineteenth-century art and was based upon an understandable environment.

In the twentieth century society was wrenched loose from its moorings. In a short period of a decade, traditional views pertaining to man and matter were shattered with discoveries by Freud, Planck and Einstein. The new theories of quantum physics, relativity and psychoanalysis challenged much that at one time seemed certain. New perspectives were brought into play dealing with the infinitesimally small and the immeasurably large. The discovery of a reality that existed beyond surface appear-

ances destroyed the traditional concepts of what "real" was. It was now the problem of the artist to give form and meaning to these new realities, to define these unknowns in terms of the conscious and unconscious. Mentioned above are but a few concepts that molded the works of the contemporary painters. They were areas of new thought that carried over into the traditional ideas of the period. Along with these changes of philosophy, the true spirit of society was also an adhering factor. Speed dominated all areas of society, not only in terms of locomotion and production, but in terms of physical and mental strain stemming from their influences. Many were left with a feeling of insecurity based upon the mounting number of unknowns brought forth by these new discoveries and theories.

It is with this background that the schools of painting to follow are discussed. The artists were now face to face with a new reality, undefined and subject to constant change, which led to many individual interpretations. They were now free to explore this unknown and to subjectively create a new reality, a reality as individualistic as a fingerprint.

### Expressionism

Expressionism springs from the internal wells of subjective experience and through intensification and symbolism, tends to express the deep emotional side of man and his association

with nature. The painter distorts forms and colors and simplifies them to make them more intense. Expressionism is a reaction against naturalistic representation. New truths and realities are brought forth by distorting and reshaping these natural representations. This allows the artist to best define his innermost feelings with the reality of his own. It is the intent of the Expressionist to convey his emotional interpretations in such a way that the public will associate themselves with this same feeling and therefore, experience the same emotion as the artist. This concept is indeed a change from the association of ocular experiences that the visual arts tend to convey.

There are many varying forms of Expressionism in the art of the twentieth century. The same intent is present, but the artist's individuality takes over at this point so that quite often, varying forms of Expressionism take on quite different appearances. In discussing some of the Expressionists, the effect that the musical motif has made in regulating their style and approach to their subject matter will also become apparent.

In Paris around 1905, lived a group of painters called "Les Fauves" (wild beasts) because of their violent reaction against the naturalistic representation of reality. This

group, headed by Henri Matisse (1869-1954), must be recognized as one of the forerunners of Expressionism. Matisse's work, like that of Gauguin, showed a sacrifice of visual reality for a simplification of all form. It was typical of the Fauve movement that a brilliant pure use of color paralleled the simplification of form, bringing forth an art of brilliantly moving large planes of pure color.

The Fauve movement was a derivative of the Cubist movement--a breakaway caused by their distaste for the academic system and the Cubists' subdued use of color. Rouault, Utrillo, Marquet, Vlaminck and Dufy were also connected with Matisse and the Fauve movement. Possibly it was not of their choosing, but it was typical of the galleries to hang those works of brilliant colorists together which led to the grouping of these works. Their color, a greater move from reality than even the Impressionists, caused a violent public reaction and eventually was responsible for the dissolution of this school.

Woman With Guitar (Figure 28) by Matisse is an example of the Fauve approach to painting. It is apparent that all forms have been simplified to their very basic elements. The leaves in the background, the distorted and extremely simple figures and the over-simplified facial features

remind one of the works of Gauguin and his primitive stylization. "I dream," wrote the artist, "of an art of balance, purity, and serenity, an art devoid of depression or disquiet, but which has a calming influence on every mental worker, like a sweet consolation or an easy chair, in which one can rest after physical fatigue."<sup>14</sup> Such a statement helps us to understand why Matisse neglected all details such as facial features.

The musical instrument and sheet music are used compositionally somewhat as the Cubists used these elements of the motif. Matisse kept the flowing curves of the guitar to accentuate the repeat the lines of the figure, and to contribute to the even flowing array of lines that are so dominate in this composition. The sheet music is another device to add contrasting areas of textural and tonal interest.

It is with these qualities that we find Matisse a decorator of genius. He looked for expression in the joyous use of color, line and rhythm, not in the staunch use of the academies and realistic representation.

Georges Rouault (1871-1958) was also an Expressionist

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<sup>14</sup> Diehl, Gaston. Henry Matisse. Universe Books, Inc., New York, 1958



Figure 28. Matisse, Woman With Guitar

Figure 29. Georges Rouault, The Parade



who earlier displayed his work with the Fauve group. Rouault's work differed a great deal from many of the Fauve ideals however. He was an artist of deep Christian conviction which is a rarity in modern art. Rouault turned against middle-class hypocrisy and turned to images of those people who stand outside society. He turned to the use of clowns repeatedly to capture their self-inflicted ridiculousness of deepest tragedy and through this tragedy, achieved a power of expression which reminds us of the suffering of Christ. To Rouault, art was a means of expressing his religious feelings. In order to understand Rouault's artistic form, it is important to first understand his background of deepest influence. Rouault began as an apprentice to a stained-glass window maker and had great admiration for the medieval window with its deep colors and heavy frame. It is still easy to recognize these window elements in the works of Rouault.

In Figure 29, Rouault's The Parade, the bold, heavy moving lines add to his great feeling of rhythm. As is found in so many of his works, the subject matter revolves around the use of the clown in his many endeavors. The bass drum is used as a basic theme element. The drum is a natural selection since clowns, music, parades, drums and

the glamour of these elements together seem to go hand in hand. With the clown, this is just one aspect of his way of life. There are many who feel that Rouault is the greatest of all Expressionists. Others feel that his emphasis upon the heavy, dynamic lines takes away from the true expression. Regardless of the individual interpretation, it is evident that his work possesses an enormous amount of rhythmic movement and self-expression that reaches for the maximum in subjectivity.

Up to this point in Expressionism, the musical motive has consisted of musical instruments in close correlation with the individual or figure. This close association between instrument and musician is consistent with the artist's demands when a deep subjective interpretation is desired. The artist not only grasps the shape, texture and design of the many different instruments, but also captures the feelingful interpretations of the musician. There is another artist closely associated with this type of subject matter. Although he is not consistent in his use of the musical motive in his composition, he frequently does convey a deep emotional association between player and instrument. Such an artist is Ben Shahn.

In Shahn's The Violinist (Figure 30), the distortions and constant feeling for even total structure are easily recognizable along with his over powering emotional expression of the musician. It is quite common for an artist to show distastes for elements in his society through his art. This seems to be the case with Shahn in this instance. His use of lights to highlight the areas of emotional emphasis, such as the eye-brow, the wrinkles in the forehead and small line work on the instrument and fingers, are unique. A sad, almost eerie composition is depicted, leaving the sole interpretation of his work to the world. Shahn's expressive report to the public is consequently released and with it, his expressionistic techniques have been searched to the maximum.

Along these same lines, Marc Chagall and his Green Violinist (Figure 31) should be mentioned. This picture does use the instrument and musician as a basis for his composition, yet there is much more than meets the eye in the work of Chagall. Chagall is primarily a Fantacist. He does rely upon some of the basics such as elements of recognizable subject matter to act as a basis for his release of emotions. However, to this he adds his dream-like distortions of form and color, his emphasis upon the fantasy

and his floating compositional make-up that is characteristic of his subjective approach.

The instrument plays a smaller role in this case than in the prior work by Shahn. Other elements have assumed supporting roles to the instrument, such as the floating figure at the top, the buildings distorted to fit the composition, and the great array of flamboyant colors, all of which seem out of place in terms of reality.

Fantasy, then, delves still deeper into the subconscious to grasp at the basic roots of emotional interpretation. It is with this approach that we find most of the elements used to their fullest. Whether dream or nightmare, great distortions of form and color are common and accepted as fact, and give way to the formation of a new reality based upon fantasy.

Other influential elements of the musical motif tend to act as basic structures toward an expressionism of a different visual nature. This form of expression takes on the appearance of movement in varying forms and degree. The artistic motive is based upon the rhythm, movement and motion of musical sound--the play of music's emotional impact upon the individual's creative impulse. Through these impulses, an artist can record the feelingful association between musical phrasings and the mind, through rhythm and an individual's kinesthetic feeling and the interplay of moving lines and

**Figure 30. Ben Shahn, The Violinist**

**Figure 31. Marc Chagall, Green Violinist**





spaces. The carry over of such musical terminology as lilt, rhythm, flow, swell, soft and accent are also very helpful in describing and inter-linking these two areas of expression.

Composition #2 (Figure 32) by Wallis Kandinsky, Gotham News (Figure 33) by Willem de Kooning, X-1955 (Figure 34) by Hans Hofmann and Composition (Figure 35) by Mathieu, are illustrative of this approach to "action" painting or the "moving" arts. The same all over feeling of movement and order is prevalent, yet, the individual stylization adds freshness to each work of art. It is this form of inner expression that keeps variety and zest in Expressionism. One cannot help noticing and feeling the excitement of the rhythmic statements common to these illustrations.

It is through moving statements such as these that the speed and electrical tension of our culture is conveyed to the people, and it is through this new reality that our culture will be remembered in future centuries.

Since movement of line and space have been the essence of music's position with the "action" painters of the Expressionist movement, two other artists with a somewhat different approach should be discussed with them, Giovanni Boldini and Max Weber. In Giovanni Boldini's The Orchestra (Figure 36), the feelingful use of moving lines and spaces captures the rhythmic motion of violins in action. Boldini,

Figure 32. Wassily Kandinsky, Composition #2

Figure 33. Willem de Kooning, Gothem News



Figure 34. Hans Hofmann, X-1955

Figure 35. Mathieu, Composition



however, did not give up his use of recognizable form in capturing this motion. Recognizable form to him was important. As a famed portrait artist, he felt a need to retain the objective approach to form as was demanded by his public. Therefore, we find this same emphasis upon movement that was prominent in the works of de Kooning and Hofmann, correlated with a more personal demand for natural form.

A similar association could be drawn to the painting Music (Figure 37) by Max Weber. Weber, in this particular instance, has drawn a closer association with recognizable figures, although this is not always the case with him. Weber has had a number of changes of style through the years as he touches upon one school of thought and then another. In his Music, his movement is captured in his loose approach to the figures which are never static and tight in conception, but almost impressionistic in form. All emphasis upon background has been avoided. Weber's prime interest was in capturing the true spirit of the occasion, the interplay of music and the souls of all those involved.

The advent of the jazz era was another inspiration to the contemporary artist. Based upon the Negro influences of blues and ragtime, jazz became a way of life to the Negro.

Figure 36. Giovanni Boldini, The Orchestra

Figure 37. Max Weber, Magic





It was instrumental in recording their joys and sorrows and giving hope and inspiration to their future. Soon, jazz became nationalistic in spirit and truly one of the basic American contributions to music. Due to its wide acceptance by the American people, artists began to depict the gaiety and the release of emotion that jazz had upon the Negro people.

Robert Riggs has painted a number of pictures based upon jazz and the American Negro. His painting The Jazz Session (Figure 38) is almost characteristic of the early classical American period through his conformity to many of their traditional concepts. Yet, Riggs goes beyond the classical tradition to capture a great deal more emotion and expression. He is not interested in realistically depicting the Negroes in jazz, but rather their facial expressions, their intimate relationship with this musical form, the true spirit that drives them to this form of release, the sadness of their fate and many other elements that were the cause of this new American concept of music.

As jazz became more prominent in the American way of life, new ideas and thoughts tended to parallel philosophies of art and eventually modern jazz developed. Based upon Expressionistic ideas, jazz became more subjective as

musicians began to improvise upon set chord structure. They developed new realities based upon set patterns of melodic phrasings and created a music more personal and more expressive in context to the original theme. In capturing this new jazz feeling, artists not only were concerned with this modern feeling for movement and mood in the artistic sense, but they were equally as interested in capturing the freedom of expression released to the individual musician. No longer were musicians required to stick close to the melodic line. They were free to roam, to move about musically, and to create a new reality--a freedom paralleling Mathieu and the "action" painters.

In B. Peak's, The Guitarist (Figure 39), the feeling is there. At a glance, it is easy to wrap up the freedom, the movement, the jazz feeling all in one neat conception of the musical elements of jazz. The use of broad planes and simplicity of form has given away to a greater emphasis upon capturing the technique, a technique that stresses the use of fast brush strokes and fleeting, rapid representations.

There are many forms of Expressionism that meet the eye. Because of its emphasis upon the personal and the desire of the artist to express himself subjectively, the many modes of expression differ. Yet, more than any other mode

Figure 38. Robert Riggs, The Jazz Session

Figure 39. B. Peak, The Guitarist



of expression, Expressionism probably best captures our true culture and reflects the impact of our society upon man.

## THE MUSICAL MOTIF AND ITS INFLUENCE UPON MY PAINTING

Painterly philosophies are usually wellmolded and established according to prior patterns of influence early in their practice. Although this is sometimes not so, many of us look back to these personal contacts which tended to develop our philosophies, our way of analyzation and our personal likes and dislikes. These elements may be minute in detail but their influences are quite powerful. Prior influences are significant in developing a basis for personal preferences about contrast, color, form, balance, etc.

Music has been a way of thinking and a personal means of expression with me since early childhood. Close family ties were molded early with elements of music as the basic influence. Since we were all musicians, by light definition, music became a form of mutual interest and led to many hours of close family relationships. Stability in any social relationship such as this tends to have favorable effects and consequently acts as a basic element for molding what we would consider a favorable outlook toward our future association with society. It was also because of this early association with music that music became a first mode of personal expression, a means of actively deviating from the norm that led to a more personal and suboconscious approach

to emotional interpretation. I learned to look at things with musical analogies. Those musical elements such as harmony, balance, rhythm and tone became terms with which I could describe and associate myself with social surroundings. They became adjectives with me, almost a way of seeing reality. I think we often look for a synonymous association between something new and something old. This gives us a familiar ground upon which to form new analogies and new realities. Musical terminology, therefore, acted as a catalyst in interpreting new experiences and associating them with a very influential part of a young life.

Art has since established itself as the dominant area of personal interest. Even so, musical elements and influences are still not isolated from my thoughts and aspirations. Instead, these elements were deeply enough imbedded in my interpretation of all things that understanding art factors such as movement and rhythm became much easier. Consequently, a deeper association between these two modes of expression became evident. Art and music almost became synonymous with me.

It is only natural that many musical interpretations enter into my painting. Of course, musical elements are only a part of the whole. A feeling for structure, a love of heavy contrasts, a reliance upon earthy colors, are

influences from other prior schools of painting that are characteristically very instrumental in developing my painting philosophy. A constant drive for new variations of these painting elements leaves open the possibility of someday discovering a new and exciting approach to expression. Still, I feel that an eventual isolation from these deeply imbedded roots of musical analogies will be impossible as well as personally undesirable.

Jazz has become my closest connection with music. It is when I play jazz, instrumentally, and paint that I show the same close analogies to form and improvisation. My emotional and interpretive make-up is such that these two modes of expression become synonymous with me--that is, in the art of improvisation I think and feel the same way in relationship to those fundamentals that we must abide by. These fundamentals differ somewhat, yet, in each art form they are the very groundwork for further compositional structure.

In the improvisation upon the melodic line of any melody, there are set rules that cannot be broken. These rules are the basics that I refer to. Where a jazz musician improvises, he is creating a new reality or melodic line that is based upon a set chord pattern or structure. This



new reality is a close parallel to the art forms that rely upon a heavy personal subjective relationship with subject matter. In both cases, a new reality is brought into existence based upon certain rules certain unbroken laws that govern action.

In music, these rules concern conformity only to those elements that discourage confusion and unharmonious sound. Even this rule is broken sometimes as a complete rebellion against social conformity. This approach would be extreme, however, as most composers and musicians tend to stay closer to social acceptance. For the most part, there are very few rules that a jazz musician must abide by; he accepts a set chord structure as a plan, abides by the number of measures from beginning to end, and he personally takes into consideration the other musicians in the group (if any) and their influence upon his thought pattern. In many instances the other musicians act as a stimulus for pushing an individual's creative performance to its maximum, in the same manner that good materials and a good environment help a painter to create to the best of his abilities.

It is from this point on that a jazz musician is free and uninhibited. He may roam and search for these new realities until completely satisfied. And, unless a musician tends to conform because of a lack of inspiration

or confidence, he will react to these chord structures and melodic phrases in different ways each time. Therefore, ten times through a particular number would probably result in ten new melodic reactions, based upon his personal creative impulses. Again, we are comparable to an artist. How many times have we seen artists paint ten canvases the same way? Even if the artist were to strive for ten exact duplicates, enough personal emotion would be involved to make each differ.

There are also rules in painting to which an artist must adhere. Again, these rules are limited and subject to change. For the most part, artists must abide by the four sides of a canvas as one limitation. There are a few limitations of the effects that can be achieved with a brush and certain color combinations. Aside from these limitations, the artist is also free to express himself. As the jazz musician is influenced by the rest of his organization, an artist is subject to social and moral influences. The world and society as well as his subconscious become a playground for expression.

It is with this close personal parallel between jazz and painting that music becomes as much a means of expression as art. It was also responsible for the basic inspiration behind the musical motif as a topic for this thesis.

Aside from the strong musical influence that prevails in my painting, there are other elements of significance that show how other schools of thought have affected my work. A strong sense for structure is prevalent in my painting style. This concern for structure and the use of similar subject matter can be contributed to the Cubist movement and the works of Braque and Picasso. Although I do not deny that the influence is present, it is my wish to carry things beyond their Cubistic ideas. I demand more of a moving approach to the musical motif than the Cubists, who were involved mostly with a static relationship of musical instruments. This strong desire for a movement of line and color is a separation from the set combination of Cubistic ideals. This free rhythmic approach of the "action" painters leaves the musical effects entirely up to one's individual interpretation. It is with the combination of both the Cubists and Expressionists ideas that I best record my approach toward the instrument and the musical motif.

Music has become, more and more, a way of life. Without music in our culture, there would be other wars and conflicts that would enter into our lives--the war of nerves, instabilities and all forms of emotional disturbancy.

Music has become a great part of us, and it is this close involvement with music that I want to capture in all its glory.

Lights After Dark #1 (Figure 40) and Lights After Dark #2 (Figure 41), were the result of a commercial night flight over the city of St. Louis. The play of lights in the darkness was impressive although my greatest involvement was with the real causes for the lights. The more dominant and inquisitive approach to the situation was brought about by the extent that music and night life probably were to have upon the lighting effect below. It became evident to me that without the large neon lights of night clubs and the production lights of musicals and symphonic productions, the play of lights would not have been nearly so impressive. Music, through my personal insight, was a dominant factor..

In these two paintings, I tried to capture this movement of light and dark and the musical significance behind the subject matter. A great deal of attention was given to heavy contrasts. Ordinarily, this is not new to my painting as this is one dominant characteristic of my work. In this case, it was so much a part of the subject matter that I wanted to keep its effect. This factor alone tended to almost over-emphasize the structural elements of the paintings. As was mentioned before, structure is an important

Figure 40. Martín, Lights After Dark #1

Figure 41. Martín, Lights After Dark #2



factor in my painting. The combination of presenting these heavy contrasts and structural elements therefore, became my concern in the presentation of this subject.

Musica Mensurabilis (Figure 42) was an attempt to record musical elements, as they appear, in relationship to one segment of a composition. Emphasis was placed upon the solid, structural feeling that acts as the groundwork for further movement. This solid form can be recognized as the series of large planes that make up the central part of the painting. This groundwork was a good basis for accenting the lower moving area that tends to sweep from the lower left corner of the picture upward through to the right side of the canvas. It was my intent to capture the personal interpretation of the "swell" in musical composition. The "swell" is a term that describes a note or phrase that is played from a degree of softness to that of a louder nature. In this upsurge, a great deal of emotion is packed into a tiny integral part of a composition. The lower movement of this painting is representative of this "swell" in music.

I have also deviated in style hoping to achieve a greater sense of movement. The lower area is somewhat loose in feeling, a little busier with more emphasis upon the move-

ment of line and color. To achieve still more emphasis, the lower "swell" is more concerned with curved lines which denote the more movement, The straight lines, as used in the more structurally solid upper areas, help to accent the rigidity of stationary form.

The darker background areas are emblematic of the mystic quality produced by a violin section playing repeated sixty-fourth notes. This use of the dark background area is a derivative of the Northern Renaissance painters. Rembrandt and Hals often used this type of dark background behind their portraits. It is an aid in accenting those areas of most interest.

The use of informal balance also helps to bring out the interpretation of the "swell" in music. Since the movement of this area starts at the extreme bottom of the picture, it emphasizes the softness, or the feeling of a low to high intensity. It is a constant use of devices such as these that help an artist to best get his intentions across to the public.

In (Figure 43) Greensleeves, the use of both the Cubistic and abstract Expressionistic ideas are easily recognized-- the Cubist use of the static approach to the instrument and the movement of sound. I have often been infatuated by the way people react to music. All people react differently



according to likes, dislikes and the surrounding mood that prevails. In Greensleeves, it was my desire to capture these people in their individual reactions to the tune of the same name.

I have a very good friend who plays a Spanish guitar. It is his practice to play "Greensleeves" in my presence, as it is a favorite of mine. It was during one of his performances that I noticed the public reaction for the first time. The entire club was completely quiet--as though each person had slipped off into his own trance. Never have I seen a better example of group concentration. I am sure that not one person was aware of his surroundings during this performance, as their thoughts were channeled in only one direction--to absorb as much of this number as possible. They wanted a closer association with this experience.

In the painting it was my intent to record this individual reaction to the number. The figure and guitar are representative of the two subjects involved. The guitar is more static in its relationship as the musical sound, not the instrument, was the dominant force. The figure is treated with a much freer approach. I wanted more of an involvement between figure and movement of sound than with the instrument. Therefore, I tried to correlate the figure

with this movement of sound, of rhythm, and the integration of music and soul. The combination of these elements helps to record the whole as it actually was. There was more of a personal association here than a group association. Each person perceived and reacted. Although this reaction looked the same to me, I am sure that each person's integral relation with the music was something more personal and more meaningful than can be ever successfully recorded on canvas.

In Music (Figure 44), some of the elements of the Impressionist school can be noticed. A technique that bordered on the mysterious and subtle use of form helped to achieve the mystic quality that was desired. Much of my concern for structure is still noticeable but an attempt was made to mute these concepts to a minimum. The real intent was to become more impressionistic, to record a fleeting impression of an instrument in its surroundings. The heavy use of contrast that prevails in my work was kept to a minimum, only taking advantage of its use in the lower left of the picture. This area was used for accent purposes only.

Figure 42. Martin, Musica Mensurabilia

Figure 43. Martin, Greensleeves



Figure 44. Martin, Music



## CONCLUSION

Throughout this paper my basic intent has been to point out and explain the many ways in which the musical motif has been used in painting. From the earliest cultures, music has been a prominent motif in painting. Although the pattern has changed due to influences of changing philosophies and schools of thought in painting, the musical motif has been instrumental in reflecting the real meaning behind the many societies that make up history.

Because of the greater number of splinter movements in painting and the thousands of artists who have individually contributed much to the past influences behind this area of thought, it is impossible to do more than touch the surface in recording music's influence on painting. It has been my wish to at least point out some of the basic areas of thought. I have also tried to show how the musical motif has been used to exemplify and project, through art, the passions, the glory and aspirations of those who make up our past cultures.

I have attempted through photographs to better illustrate music's position in painting. I am confident that their use has contributed a great deal to the simplification and understanding of this thesis.

## Appendix I

1. Bartolommeo Montagna, Madonna Enthroned With Saints and Angels.
2. Giovanni Bellini, 1430-1516, Madonna and Child With Saints.
3. Bonfizio Pitati, 1487-1533, The Christ Enthroned With Saints.
4. Francia, Madonna Enthroned.
5. M. B. Crespi, Madonna of the Rosary.
6. Girolamo da Libri, Virgin and Child With St. Anne.
7. Lorenzo Veneziano, Madonna and Saints.
8. Cima da Conegliano, Madonna and Saints.
9. Lorenzo Costa, Madonna Altarpiece.
10. Fra Bartolommeo, Mystic Marriage of St. Catherine.
11. Melozzo da Forli, Fresco of Holy Apostles in Rome.  
(several angels playing instruments)
12. Massaccio, Madonna and Child With Playing Angels.

### The Northern Renaissance:

13. Jan van Eyck, Singing and Playing Angels.
14. Hubert van Eyck.
15. Gerard David, The Virgin Among Virgins.
16. Durer, Madonna of the Rose Crowns.
17. Steve Lochner, Virgin in the Rose Bower.
18. Van Dyck, Virgin Enthroned.
19. Matthias Grunewald, Annunciation Virgin and Child With Angel.
20. The Nine Muses from Triumph of Apollo, by F. Cozza  
With Mandolin.



## Appendix 2

1. Luca Signorelli, Pan With Flute.
2. Titian, Nymph and Shepherd With Flute.
3. Bassani, St. Vincent With Heralding Trumpeters in the Sky.
4. Andrea Orcagna, Last Judgment Fresco.
5. Michelangelo, Last Judgement.

## Appendix III

1. Raphael S. Cecilia.
2. Moretto, S. Cecilia.
3. Gentileschi, S. Cecilia all With the Harp or Mandolin.
4. Guido Reni, Apollo and Marsyas.

## Appendix IV

1. The Rich Man's Feast by Veronese.
2. Peasant Family at the Table by Frans Floris
3. Portrait of Van Berchem Family by Frans Floris
4. The Egg Dance by Pieter Aertsen
5. The Feast of the Gods by Bellini

## Appendix V

1. Guercino (14th Century), The Lute Player.
2. Tintoretto (16th century), depicted two versions of The Concert.
3. Domenichino (15th century), The Concert.
4. Veronese (16th century), Orchestra of Venetians.
5. Pontorno (16th century), Mandolin Player.

6. Carpaccio (16th century), Turkish Musicians.
7. Carvaggio (16th century), The Musicians.
8. Gentileschi (late 16th, early 17th century), Young Woman Playing the Lute.
9. Bernardo Strozzi (late 16th, early 17th century), The Guitar Player.
10. Titian (16th century), Venus and the Lute Player.
11. Tiepolo (18th century), Banquet of Anthony and Cleopatra With Concert in Balcony.
12. Honthoist (17th century), The Procuress.

Renaissance Concerts in Other Countries:

1. Grunewald (16th century), Angel Concert.
2. Battista Zelotti, A Concert.
3. Murillo (17th century Spain), Prodigal Son Among the Harlots Playing a Lute.
4. Gerard Terborch (17th century Holland), 1655-60, The Concert.
5. Jan van Hemesser, 1934, The Clavicorn Player.
6. Frans Hals (17th century Flemish), Mandolin Player.
7. Charles Mouton, The Lute Player.
8. French Master of 1531, The Performers.
9. Schiavone, Noonday Concert.
10. H. Terbrugghen (17th century), The Lute Players.
11. Albrecht Durer, The Drummer and Flutist.
12. Ingres (19th century, France), Stanaty Family.
13. Manet (19th century France), The Fifer.
14. Rembrandt (17th century, Dutch), David and Saul.
15. Modigliani (20th century, Italy), The Cellist.

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