

What Is Music Really?

by Lyndon H. LaRouche, Jr.

The following is adapted from a discussion that Lyndon LaRouche had with associates following an informal evening of music on May 10, 2015.

Take the Schubert Ninth Symphony, conducted by [Wilhelm] Furtwängler.¹ You have everything in there which is required in that nature, and it occurred in a certain period of his life where he was totally dedicated to get this mission across. Why would he pick the Schubert symphony—why would he do that? His direction of the Schubert symphony was something absolutely unique, nobody ever did it properly again. And after the greatest musicians had heard it, they knew that Furtwängler was the only one who really owned that symphony.

So, the point is that, it's the mental condition: If you think that you, by some mathematical magic, have turned a score into music, you are—forgive my statement—full of shit. Because it doesn't work! Because the great compositions, if they are indeed great, don't do that. They don't try to do that.

Furtwängler's performance is a very clinically crucial thing. Everything about that is total suspension. And the suspension is totally controlled. When you hear, experience, the Furtwängler version, and you hear it in reasonable concern, you do not hear it in sections.



Wilhelm Furtwängler rehearses Beethoven's Symphony No. 2 with the Berlin Philharmonic Orchestra, February 1948.

You have a kind of religious experience, which starts out, in a sense, instructing you morally, at an opening. And then it goes through—like the second movement—it goes in a certain way which is almost magical. And most people, as conductors, couldn't do it. They butcher it, with rhythmic routines. They don't see where the progress is, in the process of that movement. They don't see the daring explosion, which is effected by Furtwängler's direction, at that point. And then the finale, the effect of that—Boom! Boom, Boom! This is charged! This is really Schubert.

I know of the mystery of this thing. I just worked at it for some time. It's a kind of thing which people call "religious." But what happens is, the people say, "well, this is religious." They may be Satanic, but this is not true religion.

1. The recording referenced here, "Schubert: Symphony No. 9 / Haydn: Symphony No. 88," Furtwängler/Berlin Philharmonic Orchestra, is available from [Amazon.com](https://www.amazon.com).

Because if you want to actually compose something actually worth performing, and if you want to perform it in a way that does not butcher it, or butcher its intention, you have to give way to a meaning of your life. And the difference is, the average person thinks that they're born and they die, and they organize their lives on the basis of this idea, "I'm going to live until I die." And that's the end for them. That's their goal. Their goal is, perversely, implicitly, to die. Because they assume that everything that they do that's valuable is going to end with their death.

This is not the case with Furtwängler. This is not the case with the greatest composers, and the greatest singers. It's not! The purpose is to achieve a quality of immortality, which is not mechanical, which is not a routine, but which creates an image by the performer, by the person who's hearing it, who is experiencing it, to have a premonition of immortality. What's the immortality located in? Well, you're going to die; so what? You're going to die. I've done more living than most, so I can tell you about this.

The importance is what you are doing for the future of mankind. And I can tell you, what Furtwängler did with that Schubert, was exactly impassioned on that basis! He knew he was the end of his culture! Not of his life, but of his culture! And he produced works which he intended to be his signature of immortality. And every human being who really understands what a human being's business is, has the same attitude.

The Meaning of Music

The purpose of life is not to live as long as you can. The purpose of life is to create a future for mankind, just as we're doing now on the question of the galactic water system: The galactic water system principle is now the basis on which the existence of the United States now depends. Because without the application of the galactic water system principle, you cannot save the United States. You cannot save the existence of the United States. It becomes trash. It becomes something which is a dead culture.

And therefore, the purpose of these things, is to give way to the fact of your own actual immortality. Not an immortality you dream about, about your future, but the realization that what you're doing is something which is energizing the immortality of that kind. And that's what we're doing.

Mankind is a unique species! There is nothing like it, there's no animal that's like it. There's no animal

which produces mankind. Mankind is a unique phenomenon. And the characteristic of mankind is creativity! And therefore, what you want to do in life, you want to accompany your life with things like great music. Because they perpetuate your existence by perpetuating what you're capable of doing for mankind.

That's why you want to do a good performance, because immortality is looking at you—and raising questions. Here we're talking now about music, but the point is that's what the reason of music is. The meaning is not based on music, it's based on the soul of mankind.

And people who think they're very good at music, actually are mistakenly conceited. They think they conform to a standard, and they probably have conformed to a standard, but it enrages me, because that's not the issue. The great musicians who have the skills will produce the best result required. The rest of us have to experiment, and recognize what we spiritually will accept—and not accept. We are excited by knowing the truth. You don't have to perform the truth, you have to know it.

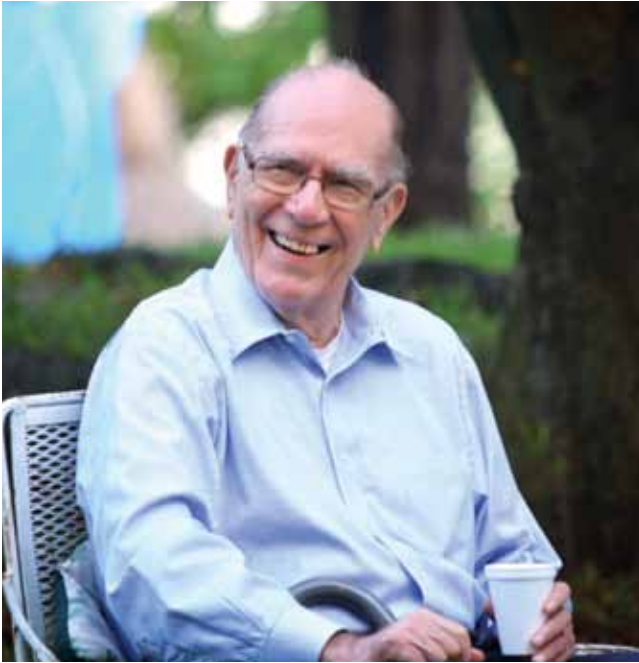
And I found that most musicians who think they're experts, really are pieces of crap, because they don't know what the meaning of their life is. They don't know what the purpose of their life is; they don't know what the purpose of their music is. And therefore, what they do, they sound acceptable—Hah!—but it's nonetheless crap, because there's no content to the substance there.

The purpose of music is to perfect an insight into beauty, not to produce it. There's too much work to do, to do both at the same time. What you do is you build up a passion, which is a human passion, and which makes music, when it's properly understood, one of the most powerful and important things that mankind can have.

Great Musicians Don't Play Music

The issue is not the sound of the music. That's a mistake. When a musician tries to make the sound of the music, he loses it. Because the practical musician is not a thinker, but more likely a stinker, in my experience. So the problem is, if you don't have a religious motivation in the highest sense of religion, in the sense that you are supposed to be an immortal creature who is going to die—and the immortal creature who is going to die has to transmit something in their life which raises the future of mankind to a higher state. And that's the principle of the matter.

And it's not a Twentieth-Century popular feature. And therefore the Twentieth Century has killed people. They kill their brains, they kill their minds, they kill the



EIRNS/Pavel Penev

Lyndon LaRouche

musician! How do musicians become fartists? Because they went to Twentieth-Century degeneration! We're living in a degenerating culture, and when you try to adapt to a degenerating culture, you destroy the meaning of music!

And you try to be a better musician, and you fail. But if you have a passion for mankind, and if the purpose of music is to enrich your conception of mankind, not some performance in particular. And you find that the greatest musicians compose that way, and perform that way. They don't play music! That's the crap, that's the opportunism. That's the el-cheapo version. What you have to do is, you have to have an embodiment of a mission, an intellectual mission. Which has no notes! But rather, the notes come about as they're dictated to you under that passion. And that's what the great performances are.

Don't try to be a practical musician! That's idiocy! That's the wrong way to go! You should be able to use your instruments. Good! You're able to use your instruments, but where do you go from there? Notes? Bullshit. What you do is you build up a passion, which is a human passion, and which makes music—when it's properly understood—one of the most powerful and important things that mankind can have.

But you really have to absorb it. You think you're smart and that you're a technician. Well, technicians

can sometimes pass for musicians. But without passion, without a passion which is independent of any score—how do you pick the score? How do you develop the score? Where's your passion? Is the passion on the sheet? Is it a bunch of notes on a sheet? More likely it's cheap dung, on paper!

We really have to understand what the purpose of this is! Most people are wandering through empty pages, with dung dropped along the way, trying to find in music, a music-per-se solution, in the intention of composition! And that's where the mistake is made. You need a real passion. A fighting passion to reach the truth of mankind. Any musician who seems to be just an ordinary musician of a professional capability—you see today, they're mostly boring people. Their performances are boring. Their interpretations are boring. Routine. Mechanical. And people hide their incompetencies by claiming their technical capabilities. That's a big mistake! You have to have the right passion.

That's why the singer, and the musician performer, but the singer especially, are so important. The singer is extremely important because the singer has one instrument. The mind which controls without his knowing it. That's right! The greatest performers don't know what they're doing—they don't have to! Because they find themselves using a standard of judgment which appeals to a higher authority. They don't want to do something because they don't think it's worth it. They won't change things because they don't think it's right! What's the standard of judgment? The standard of judgment is their sense of immortality.

And what's the purpose of every person's life? You think everybody is supposed to sit around, and get born, and die?! That's not a human function! *The purpose of life is to go beyond the end of it.* And to have contributed to mankind such that mankind would not have achieved otherwise. And every great composer, I guarantee you, every great composer in music operates on that basis, and has operated on that basis. The other guys have tried to fake it. They try to get technical explanations of composition! The technical—that's all part of it—but you've got to fix that thing up! You've got to get rid of the technical stuff. You've got to get into the passion.

And that's what the problem is in politics. The politicians, they're fakers! They're all fakers! They're professionals! Fakers! And it's when you find yourself in the domain of music, or the domain of comparable work, you find yourself carried away by a sense of ob-



EIRNS/Joanne McAndrews

Music is a social process: The Schiller Institute Chorus and Orchestra perform Mozart's Requiem Mass for John F. Kennedy in Boston, Jan. 19, 2014.

ligation to do something which is beyond your apparent will. To reach an effect which seems to you is beyond your ability to willfully create it.

And the most natural thing is the singing voice, the human singing voice. Even the speaking voice, when trained at all, depends upon a creative force. And now when you have to create a sense of the creative force, per se, then all your capabilities as a musician suddenly become real. Whereas, if you try to be a technically perfect musician, it's not so good. Nobody is going to show up for the show. Not for very long. Not twice. Not a few times.

The passion: You live only so long. What makes you a meaningful object for the time before your demise? Are you expressing a passion which is worthy of great musical composition? That's the question.

The Music of the Unheard Performance

Music is a social process, not an individual process. The individual is challenged, but the success is social. And if people would understand that, they would become better musicians. You have to have a driving passion. Just trying to perform something you know is difficult. How do you remember it? Well, you don't remember it, you don't have to. It tells you. It tells you what the score is. It tells you what the performance is.

The passion does it for you.

How did Furtwängler do the Schubert Ninth Symphony? How'd he do it? How does mind work? It's the passion! People who are practical are not really skilled; they're merely trained. And my objective is to get rid of the fakery of perfection, in order to get the skill of art. "Make things beautiful," is a good way of putting it. It's an effect, but it's a good one.

The music lies not in the music. It lies in the motive for the music. Otherwise, what does the music mean? It's just a form of noise-making.

You don't want to make noise; you want to capture the mind of people. Not their ears. And the result should come through mind, not through the ears. You interpret the thing not as heard—the "heard sounds."² That's what the point is.

What you should hear is the brilliant music of the unheard performance. But you don't have to hear it, because you're already captured by it. You are the property of it. And that's what you have to do if you want to be a good musician. You want to behave as a good musician? You have to be captured by that which you think you're producing, but you're merely a victim of that! Your mind is an instrument. Your body and soul are an instrument of music. It's not the music that makes that. It's the body and soul that makes that. The music is just incidental.

And if it doesn't do that, it doesn't work. You can set out composing all night long, all year long, and you still won't succeed. But if you have the soul for it, it becomes much easier. And how do you do it? By teaching yourself? Not really. By desiring to succeed in teaching how you can, in your own self, generate that which inspires you.

2. "Heard melodies are sweet, but those unheard are sweeter..." John Keats, "Ode on a Grecian Urn"

All the usual practical stuff is crap. If you can do it well, that's good. Just don't try to fake it! Let yourself go. Give way to what the meaning of the stuff is. And the meaning is not interpretation; the meaning is something which grips you with a fierce force.

Any singing should be a reflection, at the most, of the intention, the spiritual intention. If it's not there, it's not worth doing. You can make nice sounds—some people do—but they don't convince me. Why don't they convince me? Because I know it's fake.

Music Makes You

So now we talk about what Ben has been pushing: the galactic principle!³ Well, the galactic principle happens to be the very basis for the existence of human beings! Not only human beings but a lot of other things which are the collateral pieces of junk which fly around in the system, the galactic system. So everything is on that basis. Kepler always expressed that. Nicholas of Cusa earlier anticipated that same kind of thing. That's mankind! That's the truth of our existence. The practical stuff is shit! It gets in your way. The stink in your nostrils prevents you from seeing things clearly. And everyone really should be able to know that.

But mankind is not an animal. Mankind is not a dog, it's not a cat, it's nothing of the sort. Mankind is a very special kind of creature, which you cannot find by touch, and so forth. And what we're dealing with in the galactic principle is exactly that. All the practical stuff that you're taught is crap! And most of the Twentieth Century is the biggest movement in crap in all of human history!

Anyone who is really honest about music and has any competence knows this. You don't craft it. You don't make it. You give way to it. You're presented with a proposition, an articulation. And once you get the idea, you let yourself go. And the first experiment is awkward because you're not sincere. You're trying to craft something. But you haven't let the object take you over.

Now, people allow things to take them over in the name of music and other things, but that isn't very good. You have to actually understand, you have to create a sense of what humanity's law is, or should be. And you have to find a way that you can give way to express that

kind of law. That's what's crucial. You don't get it by saying, "I'm going to just do it."

My hatred of the crap that I was subjected to in all levels of education, which was the making of me—I never believed in any crap. I never believed in any system. And I was always right on that. Especially in later years. Because people ordinarily today, still today, are degenerating. The Twentieth Century and beyond has been a period of degeneration of mankind. And what we do in music, in working with music from the Eighteenth Century and Nineteenth Century—the problem is that we no longer have any relationship to the Eighteenth and Nineteenth centuries' music. We think we do. We think we can project it, but we don't think that way! We don't believe that way! We don't have a passion that goes that way!

So how can you do music? You make a struggle to imitate yourself, to imitate your own intention. But the creation is different. And we're now at a point which is a great period, because of what Ben has done, in particular, in expostulating this question of the galactic system. The idea of the galactic system is not new. It's old. Kepler already had a very good appreciation in that direction. But the problem is that the Twentieth Century, from the very beginning, was a process of degeneration of humanity. If you were in the Twentieth Century every day of the week, you were becoming worse and worse and worse. That was the general tendency of society.

Look at it! Look at it in terms of physics, physical science. The exact year, the year 1900, defined a degeneration, an increasing degeneration of everything in terms of science and music and culture and everything else. And the only decent things that were produced in music, for example, were things that were spilled over from the Nineteenth Century. The science—the same way. So the point is, unless you realize that you're dealing with an enemy force which is called the Twentieth Century, and now the Twenty-First Century, you are not capable of really understanding what the mission of great music is, because you're so tied to the ties of the standards of the Twentieth and Twenty-First centuries.

And therefore, you really have to walk out of that stage of life, and you have to walk into an area where you can really let yourself go, and express the kinds of things you know you should know. It's true. And it takes a case of a musician, a modern musician, who can survive the crap that's produced generally. It's a question of letting yourself go. Letting yourself go: Just do it!

3. Ben Deniston, "Memo for the Next President: New Perspectives on the Western Water Crisis," *EIR*, April 3, 2015. See also: larouchepac.com/global-water

And then, hearing it, and then having a secret self-criticism, saying, “Who made me do this? What was wrong with it?” And you don’t try to say how you can fix it. You have to say, “What was wrong in the total conception of the performance?” Not what was wrong with the part. The so-called part-pleasing thing is crap. It doesn’t work, because it’s not sincere.

The Principle of Music Is Love

The essential thing is love. Music is love. The principle of music is love, mankind’s love of mankind. Of what mankind could be. And you want to do something that’s beautiful, in terms of what mankind’s nature says. And if it isn’t beautiful, you don’t want to do it. You don’t want ugly things! And the characteristic of the Twentieth Century was ugly music. From the beginning, it’s ugly music. And the music has become uglier and uglier and uglier all the time. On every street, even in speaking. In writing. In smelling! In both cases of exhorting, and in-taking.

That’s the problem. Mankind tends toward the wrong standards of truth. It starts with the conception that mankind is an animal, and mankind is not an animal. And when you start with saying that mankind is an animal, that’s when all the trouble comes in. And the only way you can deal with music, really, is on the basis of love. The love of mankind, and what mankind can do that is loving of mankind.

Because the future is: You’re all going to die. And what is the passion which corresponds, therefore, to mankind? Since everybody is going to die, what’s the meaning of human life? Is it a fact? Not exactly. It’s the creation of a more powerful capability of mankind, by purging mankind of its own corruption. Extracting mankind into the freedom from corruption. And all practical measures to craft and approve a quality of art is crap, because they are not sincere. They don’t correspond to some principle of the matter.

And this is true: You see it in drama; you see it on the musical stage; you see it in performance of all kinds.



Franz Schubert

The beauty is creativity, per se. It’s also the measure of what creativity is. So you take any composition—it’s a sacred business. If you really want to do it, you’re attempting a sacred work. And it’s a sense of man’s immortality. Even people, when they die, if they live well, they can contribute a memory of beauty, and that’s rarely done these days.

Now we’re in one of the greatest periods, the most emotional part of human history that ever existed. We exist on the brink of the threat of the immediate destruction of the human species by the forces that dominate mankind today.

Where do you find the passion

that will inform you to take the actions which will save mankind from the destruction which is being brought by mankind on himself, on society? That’s music. That’s art. It’s the sense of immortality, that those people who have died did not die in vain. But what they had decided to do is to commit themselves to the future of mankind.

The beauty of mankind’s existence always lies beyond mankind himself. We are able to become the instruments of unleashing the beauty of mankind. Every great composer and every musical performer works on that basis. If they don’t do it, they’re crap-artists. And I’ve known a lot of crap-artists.

The Trumpets Have Sounded

Take the case of the Schubert Ninth Symphony. That performance under his direction is a unified piece which contains no separations in the process of delivering the composition. And anyone who does divide it into parts is making an ass of themselves. Because the idea is that you are captured by a transition from one phase to another phase. It’s a phase-relationship. It’s not a composition of parts of the composition; it’s a process of a progressive process. And Schubert, of course, did that!

So you have to understand Schubert in that way. Therefore, you look at Schubert’s important works, and all of them have a certain coherence, and what Furtwän-

gler did with his direction of the performance of the Schubert Ninth did exactly that. It's an absolutely perfect composition, which goes from phase to phase without interruption. And when it's delivered that way, it captures the audience—if the audience is sentient—in a way which is unique.

And you just take this, take recordings of the performance of that symphony, and compare them side by side. What is unique about what Furtwängler does? Where's the plan? Where's the scheme? Where are the phases? The art, which Schubert himself created, the idea of the perfect composition, which starts from its birth to its completion. There is no interruption, there are no breaks. And the audience is taken from one state of mind, to the next state of mind, to the next state of mind, as a continuous process.

Just think about the finale of that, of how you get into the finale. You go through the whole process, under his direction, the whole process to its completion. And the trumpets have sounded! The trumpets have sounded, and are heard. Why are they heard? And what Furtwängler did in this case was not something exaggerated. It's something which was true. And Furtwängler had the mental power to be able to

do it. It wasn't the orchestra that did it; he did it!

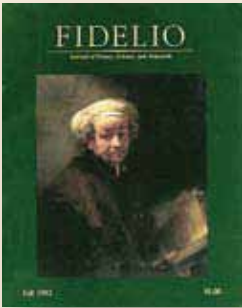
And if you look at him directly, in his direction, you know exactly what he directs. He's relentless. His idea of composition is to drive with an idea, and drive the idea through an evolution, to a conclusion. And that's what we have to do, if we're going to be successful in saving humanity from the kind of crap that's threatening us now. You have to divorce yourself from practicality, and you have to go to the level of genius. Otherwise you won't make it.

You want to do something, you want to move mankind. You don't want to do ordinary things. You don't want to do entertainment. You want to persuade people to become human, which is sometimes a difficult effort.

From the standpoint of the layman, a good performance is magical. And the best audiences in history, in the Twentieth Century, for example, they thought it was magical. The most intelligent musical audiences in that period of time all thought it was magical. It's not magical! It's genius, but that's not magic.

You try to convince people to walk out of the vicissitudes of ordinary life and look at the higher level. What makes life good? What makes living good?

Don't be a musician; be a genius!



FIDELIO

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From the first issue, dated Winter 1992, featuring Lyndon LaRouche on "The Science of Music: The Solution to Plato's Paradox of 'The One and the Many,'" to the final issue of Spring/Summer 2006, a "Symposium on Edgar Allan Poe and the Spirit of the American Revolution," *Fidelio* magazine gave voice to the Schiller Institute's intention to create a new Golden Renaissance.

The title of the magazine, is taken from Beethoven's great opera, which celebrates the struggle for political freedom over tyranny. *Fidelio* was founded at the time that LaRouche and several of his close associates were unjustly imprisoned, as was the opera's Florestan, whose character was based on the American Revolutionary hero, the French General, Marquis de Lafayette.

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