Chapter 3
Soundscape, Sound Education, and the Grain of the Music: Experiencing the Luminousness of Music Being What It Is

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Introduction

The aesthetics of European music, fully developed by the nineteenth century, were essentially literary accounts wherein music was explained by language, on the assumption that language and its meaning were based on the Greek Philosophy proposed by such thinkers as Plato and Aristotle. Their doctrine, the so-called mimesis, was a literary account wherein music was interpreted and valued by words. Both Plato and Aristotle assumed that language and its meaning were capable of explaining musical meaning and thus capable of accounting for musical understanding (i.e., Imada, 2012). This concept of European mimesis, however, isolated music from its innocent experience, and eventually created the separation of form and content in art (e.g., Sontag, 1990). This chapter will critique how this separation of form (as sonorous air) and content (storyline) actually plays out in terms of the activity of creative music-making. The chapter will examine its recommendations for music education, by referring to a "paper project" based on the concept of soundscape at a secondary school in Hirosaki, Japan.

Big Music and Big Creativity

To begin with, music history from the Viennese classicists to the Romantics should be discussed in order to clarify the foundation of the present Japanese music edu-

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cation based on counterfeit nineteenth-century creativity. In the eighteenth century, many "classical" concerts existed as a social occasion for entertaining aristocrats rather than purely for listening to music itself. The sponsorship of music, however, switched from the aristocracy to the bourgeoisie from the eighteenth century through into the nineteenth century as a result of the acquisition of wealth in the Industrial Revolution and the shift of power following the French Revolution. Audiences increased dramatically as a result of the participation of the bourgeoisie, and consequently a change in the relationship between musicians and audience. In the nineteenth century, a musician came to perform for general public rather than for the aristocracy. Many composers such as Beethoven, Schubert, Schumann, Liszt, and others became independent of their patrons while music was put into general distribution as a commodity. A distribution system of musical scores was simultaneously established for the bourgeoisie to learn and enjoy playing musical instruments in their homes. Attali (1985) points out:

> Music's mode of financing then completely shifted, making publishers partial substitutes for patrons. Interested in the production of new works, they took the risk of sponsoring them for a rapidly expanding market of amateur interpreters. The bourgeoisie, unable to afford a private orchestra, gave its children pianos. There was a need, therefore, for small number of instruments, or adaptations of that kind, were thus preferred by publishers. The breadth of the piano repertory of the nineteenth century is quite clearly connected to the place it occupied in the salons of the bourgeoisie of the time, as an instrument of sociality and an imitation of the Parisian salons and the courts. Power continued to address the musician haughtily. But the tone was no longer one of conquest; it was the tone of grocer (p. 69).

As Attali (1985) mentions, music became a commodity through publishers in the nineteenth century, "a means of producing money" just as popular music today. Many music educators in Japan, however, have hardly dealt with Western classical music as a commodity. This was partly because they have supported and taken for granted the value of Western classical music based on its aesthetic value developed from the eighteenth century through the nineteenth century in Europe since the introduction of European classical music. In this period, the concepts of beauty and art changed rapidly. Several clichés such as "originality," "a work of art," "a genius," "a prodigy," and so on about the concept of art were proposed. The subject of the aesthetics of music in this period was to establish the significance of music. Edward Hanslick, for example, asserted the original value of music and tried to rank art as the place where people were able to experience the purest beauty. He explains:

> …the most essential condition to the aesthetic enjoyment of music is that of listening to a composition for its own sake…The moment music is used as a means to induce certain states of mind…it ceases to be an art in the purely musical sense. (Hanslick, 1957, pp. 100–101)

This can be considered as a crucial statement concerning the essence of Hanslick's view of "pure music" and "aesthetics." What Hanslick (1957) attempted to explain was "the voluntary and pure act of contemplation which alone is the true and artistic method of listening." (p. 97) Cook (1990) points out:

> Hasnlick's ideas, and even some of his words, are echoed in the more wide-ranging distinction that R.G. Collingwood drew some eighty years later between what he called "(a)rt proper and

> falsely so called." Collingwood (1938, p. 276) describes false art as being "aimed ultimately at producing certain states of mind in certain persons. Art falsely so called is…the utilization of 'language' (not the living language which alone is really language, but the ready-made "language" which consists of a repertory of clichés) to produce states of mind in the persons upon whom these clichés are used. (pp. 15–16)

One of the most significant arguments, the distinction between art and entertainment in music, can be seen in the statement above. Arnold Schoenberg (1984) also states:

> Those who compose because they want to please others, and have audiences in mind, are not real artists. They are not the kind of men who are drive to say something whether or not there exists one person who likes it, even if they themselves dislike it. They are not creators who must open the values in order to be born. They are merely more or less skillful entertainers who would renounce composing if they did not find listeners. (p. 62)

Cook (1990) elaborates on Schoenberg's statement by saying that "a work of music is fundamentally a moral entity and not a perceptual one. And this is little more than a twentieth-century adaptation of the concept of 'art-religion.'" (p. 182) Western classical music in the nineteenth century developed amid a mixture of social, economic, and philosophical contexts in Europe. Though nineteenth-century classical music became commodity because of the sponsorship of music switched from the church and the aristocracy to the bourgeoisie, the music simultaneously acquired an aesthetic stance as a means of maintaining its authority. As a result of this process, many outstanding and attractive musical works were produced and spread among the general population in the nineteenth century, that is to say, the technical innovation inside music allowed it to become an excellent commodity. And with the spread of this music, it established both an aesthetic and economic dominances. These changes in music had several consequences. One such consequence is that many artistic activities became monopolized by specialized professionals such as composers, performers, and publishers. This specialization has been continued until today. Said (1991) explains:

> …we can add today's complete professionalization of performance. This has widened the distance between the "artist" in evening dress or tails and, in a lesser, lower, far more secondary space, the listener who buys records, frequents concert halls, and is routinely made to feel the impossibility of attaining the package virtuosity of a professional performers. (p. 3)

The "professional" called the "virtuoso" in the middle of nineteenth century attracted an audience using superhuman skills and immaculate techniques. In the middle of nineteenth century, many concerts included works by such earlier composers as J.S. Bach, Mozart, Beethoven, and others came to be deified and their biographies were remodeled from the middle to the end of the nineteenth century. Comini (1987) introduces a variety of Beethoven's portraits: In one drawn in 1803, Beethoven looks like an ordinary person, but in a statue made in 1902, he is seminude like the ancient Greek thinkers and becomes a heroic image. Watanabe (1989) also points out that many monuments were created in major cities of Germany and Austria in the latter half of the nineteenth century due to the influenced of German romanticism and the Germanic nationalism movement. These monuments played a

significant role to form the image of Beethoven. In short, Beethoven became one of the greatest heroes of the Germanic people. His birth centennial in 1870 and posthumous centennial in 1927 were celebrated on a huge scale around these monuments, and these events were closely linked to Franco-Prussian War and *Anschluss*, for example. Beethoven, therefore, was given the connotation of not only a great composer, but of a political hero. Walker (1996) argues:

> Aesthetics is but one of these "fashions" which emerged in the nineteenth century but lives on in western culture. It is however a well thought-out concept which has logic based in the musical structures of composers such as Beethoven, Liszt, Schumann, Brahms and Wagner, and argued in the texts of Hegel, Schopenhauer, Hanslick, Fichtes, Schelling and Schlegel. The music written to this specific theory of aesthetics experience constitutes a supreme expression of the culture of central Europe in the nineteenth century. Philosophically, this nineteenth-century German position moved the locus of debate about aesthetic experience from issues of sense perception and feelings to those of transcendental experiences of pure beauty and perfection. (p. 4)

The concept of focused listening (i.e., Schafer, 1977) to appreciate music as part of high-class culture was born. It brought about dichotomies such as artist and audience (e.g., the separation of professional and amateur or producer and consumer), winner and loser in music competitions, for example, colonizer and colonized, and so on. Thus a tradition of "Big Music" was formed. Since "Big Music" is being forced to serve this tradition, small music for everybody and creativity is somehow forgotten, especially in music education. In psychology, Kaufman and Beghetto (2009) propose the concept of four C model of creativity (Pro-c; Big-C; mini-c; little-c). The fact is, all the creativities they proposed have remained within the confines staked out by the established and preconceived genres such as the arts, chess, sports and sciences, and so on. Needless to say, "Big Music" can be considered as one of those genres. "Small music for everybody and creativity" here in this chapter is directly related to the earliest experience of music. As Sontag (1990) suggested, it should be incantatory, magical, and transparence.

Shifting from Big Music to Small Music in Education

After the Second World War, Western classical music reached a deadlock of modern abstractionism. "A certain lack of confidence in the continuing strength of the western tradition" (Griffiths, 1978, p. 126) after Anton Webern presumably comes from the Pythagorean tradition, and twelve-note serialism is where the Pythagorean tradition came to an end. As a result, many compositions such as *Turangalila-symphonie* by Messiaen, *Le marteau sans maître* by Boulez, *Telemusik* by Stockhausen, and *Music for 18 Musicians* by Reich found inspiration in the non-West. However, such exchange involved only stylistic borrowing inside music instead of a more fundamental rethinking of sound and its social, cultural, and environmental roles. Thus, these works still keep a "Big Musical Mentality" based on its "Big Creativity." Europe has a tendency to seek itself in the exotic in non-Western cultures because of the

European concepts of other and self, or home and out there, and these concepts are closely linked to such dichotomy as professional/amateur, producer/consumer, winner/loser, and colonizer/colonized being derived from logocentrism. Quite a few composers in North America, however, attempt to reflect on Western society from the bottom-up. The American composer Cage (1968), for example, suggested that music should perhaps be a term reserved for sounds produced by eighteenth- and nineteenth-century European instruments. He explained:

> If this word music is sacred and reserved for eighteenth century and nineteenth century instruments, we can substitute a more meaningful term: organized sound…percussion music is a transition from keyboard influenced music to the all-sound music of the future. (Cage, 1968, p.5)

The American composer Terry Riley composed In C in 1964. Griffiths (1978) explains:

> …is an example of a work on the borders. Riley provides only a number of modal fragments which the performers may introduce freely within a steady pulse, generating obsessive repetitions and spontaneous patter-making. (p. 166)

This fragmentism can be considered as an effective apparatus to restructure the dichotomy between professional and amateur, for example. The Canadian composer Schafer (1995) criticizes the Western orchestra:

> The orchestra as we have it today is an invention of the colonial powers of nineteenth century Europe. The music conceived for it was largely intended to enkindle the enthusiasms of Europeans for the hegemony of their culture over other "inferior" cultures around the world. Even the materials out of which the instruments were made attests to this: gold, silver, ebony, ivory, granadilla wood, rosewood—these are not materials found in Europe; they come from Africa, Asia and South America, from the parts of the world Europe was, at that time, exploiting: so that when the bourgeoisie of France or Italy or Germany or England gathered to hear a symphony concert what they were really celebrating was their empire overseas as a museum of sentimental sound objects mostly from that period.

Schafer proposed the concept of soundscape with an awareness of his duty as a composer in the twentieth century. That is to say, what is important for music education is to figure out how to reach the stage in which critical listening can be taught for small creativity. What was the first sound you ever remember hearing? Perhaps this sounds metaphorical, so you must, therefore, confess that you don't seriously try to remember it. Your first experience of sound, however, must have been experienced by yourself since you can now hear things. If so, your very first experience of sound exists somewhere inside yourself, and you may possibly be able to recall it when you seriously try to remember it. I presume the first sound you heard in your life must have been silence. And then you must have heard the grain of the sound. If one were able to keep remembering the grain—the touch and the sense of that particular sound—she or he must have known how to use words as well as numbers to indicate it. Unfortunately, many people have forgotten the grain—the touch and the sense of the sound they first actually heard. What was the first music you heard? Perhaps this sounds much easier to answer compared with the first question. You may remember a particular nursery rhyme or the theme song of

your favorite cartoon you grew up watching on television. When you were born, the world was full of music, and you grew up hearing new kinds of music every day of your life, with such prefixes as classical, pop, rock, jazz, new age, traditional, folk, ethnic, and so on. This is why we normally don't think about what music is or what it means to us. Can we ever hope to recapture our musical innocence, when we had no need to classify music into different prefixes? Or can none of us ever hope to remember the earliest grain of the music, when we did not ask about its genre or try to interpret it?

Soundscape and Music

The earliest grain of music must have contained a magical, illogical, and ritualistic manner and intensity. Just as, for example, the sounds of wood, wind, water, and fire exist with no apparent meaning attached to them. People simply started making music with their body and the materials around them. As Schafer (1977, p. 40) states: "Man [sic] echoes the soundscape in speech and music," the natural acoustic environment has always afforded human beings to hear and echo, that is to say, the first experience of making music came about as a kind of mimicry of soundscape. Schafer (1977, p. 44) continues:

> Shepherds may, as Lucretius suggests, have got the hint of singing and whistling from the sound of the wind. Or it may have been from the birds. Virgil ways that Pan taught the shepherd "how to join a set of reeds with wax" as a means of conversing with the landscape…Shepherds piped and sang to one another to while away the lonely hours, as the dialogue form of Theocritus's *Idylls* and Virgil's *Eclogues* shows us; and the delicate music of their songs forms perhaps the first and certainly the most persistent of the man-made sonic archetypes.

As Schafer points out, the earliest grain of instrumental sounds must have been created through the natural interaction between soundscape and humans. Schafer (2011, p. 8) further asserts:

> It is true that the singing of birds is frequently called "musical:" but that is about the only environment sound that is. Certainly the roar of a truck or the barking of a dog was not. We simply had no word that would unite all sounds made by nature, humanity and machines. It was then I introduced the word soundscape, referring to any or all the sounds of a particular environment, whether produced by nature, humanity, machinery or any other means.

Schafer introduced the term soundscape with an awareness of his duty as a composer in the twentieth century. In short, what is important for music education today is to allow children to experience the natural flow between soundscape and themselves in order to make their own grain of music. More practically, what activities should children experience in the music classroom?

A Sheet of Paper as an Instrument

Schafer (2011, p. 9) states:

> Should we expand the music programs in schools to include all the sounds of the soundscape? I think so because it reminds us that these two fields of sound were once closely united and that even today they are related: music invades the environment and environmental sounds inspire the rhythms and melodies.

Schafer thinks that without the existence of soundscape, musicians were unable to take advantage of that which inspired them. Once upon a time, nature was music's chief source of inspiration. Therefore, we should start by listening to the outside world to discover what we hear and what we want to hear. One becomes alone and scrupulously hears the soundscape, while at the same time she or he wants to echo the soundscape in music. If there is a sheet of paper, the person must take advantage of it as an instrument paying the attention to the touch using her or his fingers to make music. Schafer and Imada (2009, pp. 45–46) together wrote the following two exercises for children in *A Little Sound Education*:

> Take a sheet of paper and try to pass it around the room absolutely silently. It's harder than you think. As soon as your fingers touch the paper they make a sound. Now imagine that the sheet of paper is a musical instrument. Each person in the class has to make a different noise with it. How many different sounds can we think up? We could fold it, blow on it, drop it, tear it…what else? But don't crush it up until the last.

In the first exercise, children are expected to produce silence by creating scrupulous and immanent touches between their fingers and a sheet of paper. Both the manner and the form of music are presumably produced at this particular moment. This silence is directly connected to their body; that is to say, it cannot be analyzed either acoustically or physiologically (Imada, 2015). Whenever I use this particular exercise, changing both the size and material of the papers, I instruct the students as follows: "Pass it around beautifully, as if all of you are connected by one thread." They then begin to think about how to use their bodies, paying attention to the joints in their arms as well as their legs, and the position of their head, neck, shoulder blades, spine, toes, and soles. Their movement undergoes a complete change like dancing (Fig. 3.1 shows "a paper project," instructed by the author, at the Japan Women's University in Tokyo, August, 2015).

In the second exercise, children are able to find many musical aspects, such as rhythm and harmony, dynamics, and timbre, along with musical form, style, and content. It is not easy in our modern world to experience absolute silence in music by receiving inspiration from the natural soundscape. Therefore, it is crucial that children pay attention to such moments as a finger touching a sheet of paper producing delicate sounds, the physical and elegant simplicity when several sheets of paper are passed around—the rubato that paper brings. These exercises bring children into the music itself, as if they are playing the piano. The essence of music or sonority, for example, is not its capacity to express or interpret things. In short, music is different from language. When music becomes tamed by the economy of language and its attendant

Fig. 3.1 "A paper project"

value, "flattered fingers" (Imada, 2012) are formed. When the piano is played with the emotional agitation of expressionism, it is played with flattered fingers, and we hear the poorest linguistic category: the adjective. Thus, the phrase "new objectivity (*neue sachlichkeit*)" was proposed to reject the expressive excesses in late nineteenth-century Romanticism (Albright, 2004). Schafer (1977, p. 6) explains:

> It is the musical expression of the romantic artist, prevailing throughout the nineteenth century and on into the expressionism of the twentieth century. It also directs the training of the musician today.

As Sontag (1990, p. 12) puts it: "What is needed, first, is more attention to form in art. If excessive stress on content provokes the arrogance of interpretation, more extended and more thorough descriptions of form would silence." Schafer tries to recover our sense of the music itself, and its grain with the help of paper. Since nature had been musicians' chief source of inspiration for creating music, and nature itself does not express anything, we should pay more attention to sound itself and its resources (the human body and movement). When the French pianist Samson Francois plays Maurice Ravel's *Toccata* in *Le tombeau de Couperin*, his sensitive touch on the keys sounds like raindrops. The grains of the sounds he produces are not digitally constant but "natural." Or when we listen to Mozart's *O zittre nicht* sung by the Korean soprano Sumi Jo, we might recall the sound of a church bell. As a

result of their professional musical training, the sonorous air they produce sounds "natural." As Barenboim (2009, pp. 21) states:

> The art of rubato lies in being free to make imperceptible modifications of the tempo while maintaining a connection to it, an inner pulse. These modifications should be an exaggeration, but not an alteration, of certain elements in the rhythm. Furthermore, care should be taken that rubato is used only for a limited time, so as not to lose touch with the objective time that keeps ticking all along. *Rubato* in Italian means stolen and therefore, morally speaking, demands to be returned at some point.

When the raindrops hit the surface of a river, its tempo includes a gentle change. It is the sound of the rain on the leaves getting nearer to you. The sound of little clicks is uneven and stabbing. A variety of delicate changes continue forever, and raindrops in a sense create a natural rubato. Musicians such as Francois and Jo beautifully recreate the art of rubato (expressive and rhythmic freedom). How can music teachers pass on this musical experience to children without losing the primal control of music performance? Schafer makes it possible by using a sheet of paper.

Final Thoughts

The soundscape and music were once ecologically united: environmental sounds inspired the rhythms, melodies and harmonies of music. Schafer (1977, p. 111) pointed out that when the acoustic environment (or soundscape) was being overrun, it stimulated a whole wave of sensitive reactions in the music of composers as different as Debussy, Messiaen and Ives, for example. Therefore, he proposed the term "lo-fi" (an abbreviated form of "low fidelity") to reveal a poor signal-to-noise ratio in today's soundscape. This is because lo-fi destroys the natural balance between soundscape and music-making by composers. As a result, classical music, for example, will fall surely in the very near future (how can classical composers and performers possibly make music without having their inspirations from the natural soundscape?). Like Debussy, Ives and Messiaen, Schafer is a composer who noticed this. Schafer (2005, p. 90) also introduces an exercise using a sheet of paper:

> Pass a sheet of paper throughout the room without making a sound. The larger the sheet of paper, the more difficult it becomes. Several sheets of paper can be passed around at the same time. Children love this exercise. It is amazing how the ambient noise level of the classroom drops while they are performing.

I have used these paper projects at different schools—at the elementary, secondary, to university level—not only in Japan, but in different countries around the world. Using a sheet of paper, I sometimes help school teachers realize the importance of stillness and silence in music-making. Using a sheet of paper as a musical instrument is much harder than you might imagine. Everyone I have met through these paper projects has thought about the movement of the paper as well as the use of their bodies, and they have tried very hard to make their own music naturally. In the final part of the paper projects, I ask students to compose their own music using any kind

or kinds of paper. They first collect different kinds of papers while at the same time looking for different sound colors by touching them. They then start exploring the dynamics (soft and loud sounds) as well as the tempos (slow sounds and fast, rhythmic sounds). I sometimes ask them to think of many kinds of verbs, such as "to scrub," "to blow," "to tap," "to tear," "to rip," "to slit," "to drop," "to wad up," and so on to play the papers because these different actions are quite effective in creating a variety of sound colors and timbres. Some groups develop their own notations, including graphic notation, so they can also learn the relationship between sounds, music, and memory. Each performance is uniquely different, but everybody can precisely judge which one is more inspiring and musical than others. As I pointed out in the introduction, the scope of "music" in Japan has shrunk. So how and when did we lose the grain of the music we were born with as infants? The term "music" merely indicates music itself. No prefixes or adjectives for music are needed. No cultural or political music has ever existed or will exist. Through these paper projects, we should make the whole body an ear and hear the grain of the music through a sheet of paper.

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