

## Beethoven

The blending of three notes, their resonance, gently rising and falling; predominantly there is pain, as if, the music seems to say; but, it has a cheerful, impatient, rapid sound too, which searches and finds four notes, to become a delightful cascading stream. Misfortune and destiny has blind injustice; But the pace of freedom's struggle is alive and unperturbed, while ascending unwaveringly with the musical dream, to meet at victory's end, the inevitable triumphant roar. Maybe the conquest and jubilation is unstable, but, the musical dream is still firm and steady although obstructed and dominated by destiny, which is cruel and illogical.

- The grace note of the music ends and the adroit musician friend says, "speak".

"The main element is steeped in sadness", I reply, recalling and citing a sentence that I had heard before. Once you perforate that grief, you encounter the hint of joy".

"A search for happiness" ?

The music critic states, "This is life's universal situation and its gradual musical manifestation. He transformed to music our heartaches and our laughter.

There is injustice, unfair judgement, causeless misfortune, baseless grief; but, oh yes, there is life, youthful vigour and firm, rigid tenacity. You have to soar, soar and defy destiny, to attain a heroic and dignified status".

"Primarily, life force?"

"Correct, life force. Now fantasize, a young musician on the streets of Vienna, twenty two years old, attired in stylish, neat and tidy attractive dress of the 18th century, laced shirt, well groomed hair, gracious physique, a sensitive eager face, with bright and phlegmatic eyes. He has come from his birth place Bonn. He had, once, previously visited Vienna, met Mozart and even had the fortune to learn music from him. He had also taken music lessons from Haydn and Salieri. In the meantime he had become a skilled piano player. The publicity of his first symphony had already fetched him unrestrained praise and fame. But Bonn is a small town, an insignificant town. He had to conquer the soul centre of the musical world, Vienna and thereafter the world. He nurtured in his heart, lofty, enthusiastic plans, filled with merriment, but intermingled with self-conceit and arrogance.

His entire body and mind was a source of tremendous energy and perception. He fostered a burning desire within his heart for fame, repute, eminence, money, status, pride and appellation; moving, mingling, in the company of kings, queens, dukes, counts, libidinous women, love and a happy family life, was his yearning. Original sonorous sounds, unbelievable tones and harmony that moved an audience to tears, were all -gifts of God. From amongst the millions of people, it was he who was chosen, by God himself and endowed a genius, which was timeless. The crescendo and the Diminuendo of the created tunes will travel rapidly in your bloodstream and enable-you to hear the language of your heart and fathom the beauty of the world of nature. You will merge within yourself. Vienna is mine, the world is mine, whatever I seek is mine, whoever I desire is mine, is mine.

But what is this? What? You say that at a distance, a shepherd is singing? Far away, someone is playing the flute? But why have I not heard? Why has not its ripple touched my ears? What is happening to me, what is happening?

Oh yes, he is gradually turning deaf He, who, God has specifically chosen from amongst the multitude of men and blessed him to create exceptional heartfelt music, has himself chosen to impair his sense of hearing, choosing his hearing organ

alone, which is much more necessary to him, than any other mortal. What sort of mockery has God enacted? How cruel is destiny's humour?

Imagine once more, on the streets of Vienna, a young musician, having not yet completed thirty years of age, already famous in every direction; disheveled clothes, appearance, gloomy, unclean, neglected face, unruly, tangled hair, ungraceful, heavily trodden steps, lusterless suspicious eyes which seems to reflect his thoughts, saying, someone is trying to cheat him, is looking down upon him and laughing at him. He is consumed with irrepressible rage. On the slightest provocation he reprimands all with harsh words. A minimal pretext is enough for him to throw his food plate at someone. The physician has advised to take him to a quiet place, like the village of Hyleganstud, near Vienna. There, in a room of his own, he puts down on paper, his sad secret thoughts, writing, "O my friends, when you feel that I have no feeling for friendship, you describe me as irritative and even as a hater of mankind, you are not aware of the injustice that you do to me. You are not conscious of the hidden reason that lies behind my attitude towards you. Even though my nature was emotional and full of merriment and took great pleasure in the entertainment provided by society, I was soon compelled to isolate myself and lead a lonely life. It was impossible on my part to tell people, "speak louder, I am deaf". The organ that, in entirety, should have been mine alone, displaying it's amazing power, the organ that was for me fully matured, how do I now acknowledge it to be incapacitated? What shame, when someone stands near me and hears one playing the flute in the distance and I hear nothing? All these incidents have pushed me to the very edge of despondency; few more of these and I would have put an end to my life.

Sitting concealed, companionless, in solitary confinement, in the village of Hyleganstud, the self-exiled, disease riddled, irate musician, puts down these thoughts in writing. The once genial environment, filled with unrestrained appreciation of the wise, learned gentry, is no longer at hand, but far away. He has no hope of receiving those things in life, which, he had once, very intently sought; wanton companionship, adoration, love, romance and a family. His body is broken, unclean. His room is filthy, emanating a rotten odour, with insects crawling on his bed. He allows none to take care of him. He believes no one. People shy away from him and young children are frightened on seeing his face. Once, when he was twenty five years of age and not yet fully deaf, his marriage proposal was rejected. Today, he cannot even dream of those things as ladies, run away from his presence.

Away from the sound of the musical world, the broken hearted musician, with matted hair, roams alone, in the forest, oblivious to the blooming of flowers, the singing of birds, the crackle of the avenue of trees, grass, garden and the purl of the brook, which rushes by, capriciously. In the evening, at a distance, in the village tavern, dancing music enlivens the soul and groups of young men and women flock towards the venue. However, his ears have not heard these sounds, his soul probably has, as his entire body and mind has become purified, in its wrenching grip. Life's meaningless sadness and the world's varied joyous sounds, have, through his pen, dancing in his fingers, occasionally, inspiring deeply or at other times, shrieking, in agonizing pain, has, protested and disobeyed, to become reinvigorated.

His loneliness, the poverty of his mind, the essence of his existence and its inadequacy; what was its purpose? It's motive was to find life's compassion and sorrow, life's joy and earnest desire in music. Its result was the birth of so many piano sonatas, violin sonatas, quartets etc etc and our cultures invaluable treasure, the nine symphonies. You can feel its impact in your eyes, that have been rekindled with tears, your motionless body and in the ripple of your silent room, with its besotted and amazing atmosphere, as you have merged within your own self. The critic says, Haydn and Mozart had put music on a high altar. He brought music down

from there and ripped apart its smoothness and softness. Thereafter he refashioned music with life's rough and harsh reality. He immersed music in his life's whirlpool.

Our heart cries out for him but we cannot lose this music.

"Meaningless sadness"? I interjected. "Without reason? Maybe baseless, or totally without a cause. We have heard that he turned deaf due to a defect in his blood circulation or maybe owing to syphilis, a contagious sex related disease that was prevalent in the nation. It was not improbable as he was a careless and unscrupulous artist. His life energy was intense, bodily passion unrestrained, uncontrolled and ever ready to trade. Thus, it was not impossible for him to contract a sex related disease. Moreover, contraceptive devices, during the 18th century, probably did not exist.

Again, if we allow our imagination to run, we find the young musician on the streets of Vienna. He is yet to complete the 30th year of his life and he realizes that he is unable to, hear the high notes; properly. But now he is in Vienna which is also an important centre for medical science, covering not only the physical but mental too. Imagine the deaf musician in a doctor's chamber, a famous physiologist employing a technique is examining his damaged organ with the light reflecting from a lantern. We are aware that the physicians have divided the ear into three parts the external ear which is remains outside the head. It collects words and dispatches them to the tympanic membrane or the ear drum. The waves of the words vibrate the drum. The middle ear has one round and another egg shaped window like cavity or hole, within which three bones act like an efficient lever. The last of these bones fit like a piston into the inner ear, which is filled with a watery fluid, a pressure on which produces vibrations. The inner ear is snail shaped and is in fact a long coiled tube. The tube is partitioned into compartments all along its length. The major partition is called the basilar membrane, which has small hair like outgrowths. The spiral shaped coiled tube is called the cochlea. As the fluid in the cochlea vibrates, the basilar membrane and consequently, the hair cells vibrate and rub against a shelf in the inner ear. The rubbing of the hair results in transmission of a message to the brain which makes us aware of sound.

Aha, in the inner ear can be noticed the "growth of a few tiny additional bones which are termed cochlear osteosclerosis, due to which there is obstruction in the waves that fall on the neural pathways and thus the brain fails to receive the message. "Don't worry", the physician says, "don't worry, Herr Kapelmystar, Herr Hoforganist" or something like that, "Once we remove these bones everything will come into order. A minor operation will restore the nerve current to its former status. It is not a big thing. By the way, did you ever suffer from typhoid?" In this manner after a trivial operation, the hearing sense of the musician was redeveloped and he heard as if someone at a distance, was sounding a long drawn deep note on a flute. His heart trembled and he apprehensively opened his eyes and aha, what relief ! Someone has surely put the flute to his lips and ... the world is so expressive, the natural world so fascinating and people are so beautiful.

We too are consoled, because at that time, he was only twenty seven years old. At such an young age, a circulatory disturbance in blood is not so destructive, nor such serious damage could be the result of a disease like syphilis. Most probably, as the experienced doctor from Vienna had surmised, he suffered from typhoid, which caused the growth of the extra bones. All that was required now was an operation. If that was not possible, a thorough examination of the ear with Roentgen's ray could possibly reveal the real cause of the affliction. If a filament has been torn, an artificial filament could be connected. On the other hand, if the ear drum has been torn, replace the ear screen or sew it with ultrasonic waves or insert a battery operated hearing aid or ear machine. The brand new world would then easily be absorbed in the consciousness. It is so very easy.

The young musician is no longer lonely. He is well dressed and neat in appearance. His eyes shine with intense desire. At his beck and call has come fame, glory, fortune, royal honour, loyalty, friendship, beautiful women, love, marriage, family life, worldly pleasures and entertainment. Every step in the rhythm of his life is filled with rapture. His life is full and without a shadow of grief on any layer.

And this fulfillment and its euphoria, what was its consequence? The upshot of it was the birth of so many sonatas, good symphonies, like ten other symphonies, technically correct and proper, with a hint of sadness, compassion and struggle. But a few tunes are missing and some sounds were excessive, so my eyes are no longer as elated with tears as before, nor my being is fully satisfied.

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The musician friend said, "I was not aware that such things had happened, that he recovered his power of hearing?"

"No", I said, "because at that time, medical science had no knowledge of such surgery nor were there any battery operated hearing instruments and x-ray was yet to be invented. We are grateful for that, because our heart cries out for him, but can we be deprived of that music"?