

Echoes and Engagement: The Musician-Listener dynamic

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ABSTRACT

The relationship between the artist and the audience is mutually beneficial. A successful performance creates a connection between the performer and the audience. Music is a source of communication between the artist and the audience, creating a soul-to-soul connection through the tune. The music-listener dynamic explores the intricate relationship between musicians and their audiences, emphasizing the interactive and reciprocal nature of musical experience. Rather than viewing listeners who are shaped by the musical moment. Through the lens of performance studies, psychology, and cultural theory, the paper examines how musicians craft their performances in response to audience feedback and how listeners in turn, experience music through personal memory, social context, and sensory perception. Drawing from live performance observations, interviews, and existing literature, this work highlights the 'Echo' effect: the way musical expression reverberates within and between individuals, creating a shared emotional space. The musician-listener dynamic is presented not as a linear transmission but as a fluid, ongoing dialogue. This paper ultimately argues that understanding this dynamic enriches our comprehension of music as a living, communal art form that transcends technical execution, becoming an act of co-creation between performer and audience.

INTRODUCTION

Art has historically been understood as a means of expression, communication, and reflection. It transcends mere decoration. Its openness can make it elitist. But in general, it is also a part of entertainment, and music is the best part of it. Because most of the art form, such as Theater, Dance, Cinema has used music as a part of those art or performance. On the other side, the artist has often been viewed as a visionary or truth-teller, someone who sees beyond the ordinary. In the modern era, artists are often pressured to conform to market demands, diluting creativity for profitability. At the same time Music is the core of every art form. Art and artists are complemented by each other. Art requires the artist, or the identity of the artist in their artwork. According to Leo Tolstoy, "Art is not only an expression of feelings, but also a manifestation of feelings" (Banerjee, 1957, p.26). Art is both expressive and evocative- "When the spectator or listener is stimulated by the emotion felt by the artist, then it is art" (Banerjee, 1957, p.26). The purpose of music is to embody the perception of feeling in the contours of music. Although vocal music is at the root of all music, instrumental music also covers a wide range. Art has been characterized in different ways, such as painting, sculpture, drama, dance and music. All the arts express their perspectives in different ways. That manifestation is sometimes long-lasting and sometimes short-lived. Among them, music is called the greatest art. There are some ordinary differences between these industries. For example, painting or sculpture is a visual art form and these categories make pictorializing and non-audible form. In theater, there is both visualization and hearing. In dance, there is a dynamic interplay of confrontation and subtle listening. Finally, in music, there is only listening, not visualization. One thing that emerges from this is how much sustainability depends on it. The artist creates something that enriches people's lives through enjoyment and pleasure, and the audience enriches the artist's thinking by supporting their work. There are three things the audience provides to an artist including appreciation, criticism and comments, which are significant accomplishments. Whether seen or heard, the persistence of an artwork in the brain depends on whether it is brief, portable (psychologically) and associated with one's own thoughts. Painting or sculpture can be preserved for a long time; thus, its durability is long. Drama and dance cannot be preserved for long and hence their durability is relatively low. Now, in the age of video, this problem no longer exists. In the case of music, there were no records before, but people could easily remember the tunes. Music has been part of human instinct since the beginning of human civilization. The melody can easily fascinate the human psyche. A song can easily convey what people cannot easily understand. Music has links to other forms of art. As a result, a comparative analysis shows that the stability of music is longer than that of other media.

LITERATURE REVIEW

The relationship between artists and their audiences has long been a subject of academic discourse. It has dynamic vision. Scholars have explored how audience reception influences artistic production and how cultural and historical contexts shape interpretations of art. This literature review examines

existing research on audience reception, artist intent versus interpretation, cultural influences on art appreciation, and historical shifts in audience engagement.

Audience reception theory, as proposed by scholars like Stuart Hall (1980), suggests that viewers actively interpret artistic works based on their personal experiences, cultural backgrounds, and ideological positions. Research has indicated that audiences may derive meanings that differ significantly from the artist's original intent, highlighting the active role of interpretation in the artistic experience (Eco, 1979). The article "Audience and Artists" aligns with these findings by discussing how different viewers perceive artwork in diverse ways, sometimes contradicting the artist's expectations.

The concept of "Intentional fallacy" (Wimsatt & Beardsley, 1946) argues that an artist's intended meaning is not the sole determinant of a work's significance. Many scholars assert that meaning emerges through interaction between the artwork and its audience. Barthes (1967) further expanded on this idea in "The Death of the Author," advocating for the decentralization of artistic intent in favor of audience-driven interpretation. The article under review supports this perspective, illustrating how artistic meaning is often negotiated rather than dictated by the creator.

The interpretation of art is deeply embedded in cultural and social contexts. Bourdieu (1984) argued that an individual's cultural capital—comprising education, social class, and exposure to the arts—affects how they engage with artistic works. Studies on cross-cultural aesthetics suggest that different societies value various artistic elements differently, which affects audience reception (Carroll, 2002). The article acknowledges these influences, emphasizing the role of cultural and social backgrounds in shaping the audience's understanding of artistic messages.

Audience engagement with art has evolved over time. During the Renaissance, art was primarily commissioned by religious and political elites, restricting audience interaction to specific social groups. With the rise of mass media and digital platforms, modern audiences have more opportunities for participatory engagement, reshaping traditional artist-audience dynamics (Benjamin, 1936). The article traces similar historical shifts, noting the transition from passive spectatorship to more interactive and participatory modes of engagement.

All the author mentioned the relationship in other titled books or Article. But there is big research gap that no research work or no kind of full original write up in this field, specially in Bangladesh. As a most important issue that every musician feels but no one can focus on it or write on it.

METHODOLOGY

This study employs a qualitative research methodology to explore the relationships between artists and audiences. It draws on a preliminary

investigation involving interviews with prominent artists, musicologists, organizers, and various types of audiences. Secondary data resources, such as books, newspapers, journals and internet articles are utilized to gather relevant information within the broader narrative. Monographs are authored by musicians, musicologists and culturally involved people who share their practical knowledge and experience with the author. Primary data complements secondary sources. A critical analysis of these materials will be carried out to assess their credibility, relevance, and alignment with the objectives. All citations will follow APA (7th edition) guidelines.

DISCUSSION

Music is the best medium of fine art. Reasons include the use of words to express feelings, the use of melody to enliven the words, the use of rhythm to inlay the melody and words together, and above all, using all the elements, the whole song has a story or saga. That story is sometimes fictional, sometimes written on its own and sometimes based on the true events around it. For those who appreciate music, it often serves as a comforting companion-whether in times of sadness or happiness- offering a brief escape and moments of peace. Only music has the power to paint a perfect picture of the inner nature of the human mind and other media of art touches it but indirectly. In this context, the philosopher Hegel made a statement comparing music with painting- "The material of music is sensuous but more emotional. Our feelings and emotions are echoed in the melody of music" (Banerjee, 1957, p. 28).

Foremost, what is art? Art is the resource through which people express their thoughts when the highest level of mindfulness is achieved. As a result, the image of any emotion or feeling creates a special feeling in the mind, because the expressed matter has a special ability to bring out the inner feelings of the artist or the other wing and enrapture is felt in its expression. Art is created through the imagination of people or the representation of surrounding content differently. Art is created for the sake of the unspeakable or the desire to like anything or to appreciate the good in all its inconsistencies. But the presentation should be proper.

All that is beautiful in this world is eternally true. Painting is true, singing about it is true. Symbols of eternal true beauty, such as flowers, birds, and the moon, cannot be said to fall under the level of art. When a picture or a song brings joviality to the heart that is art. Neither this glee is not created for the purpose of entertainment, nor is this jubilation the opposite of melancholy.

Whatever the subject is the intensive realization of sadness or happiness is the amusement of the soul. Tears in the eyes when listening to the music of suffering, love in the heart when listening to love, or being thrilled at the message of happiness are among the signs of art. There is no such thing as ugly in art. Even the ugliest things are transformed into beauty by the touch of an artist. The picture that is painted, the song that is sung, or the dance that is performed must have harmony with the subject, form and sap. If these forms and ideas grow to

sap, it is called art. Just as drawing a picture does not make it a work of art, dancing or singing does not make a person a dancer or a musician. Those who sing are called singers and those who play instruments are called musicians. When this singer or musician puts their own ideas into a song and enjoys it, they are elevated to the level of an artist, because they have taken the song to the level of art. In this context, Sucheta Chowdhury says,

The singer does not write in the notebook how to get rejoice, how to bring down the flow of sympathy in the heart of the listener with the melting flow of the melody, he knows how to sing, he knows how to fill the sky with the sound of the instrument of the soul, to float in the flood of gloom, to wake up the tingle with excitement. The dancer has the power to activate only one of the myriad bowls of his feet and silence the rest. The listener is enthralled, floating in the ocean of delight. This cheerfulness is not worldly; this pleasure is not tainted by corruption; this is purely the amusement of artistic enjoyment, which is like the test of spiritualism. (Chowdhury, 2002, p. 395)

Whether in the East or the West, the craftsman is the artist. But it requires another group to complete the art. Who are the other wings? Since listening is the key to music, it is better to call the other group the listener. However, if someone thinks about various live programs or music videos of the present era, it is preferable to call the other group the audience. In the case of music, the artistic-minded people are called audience or listener. The viewer or listener can be an average person or a humorous one. There is no yardstick for being a viewer or listener, but if the viewer or listener is jocular, then proper appreciation or merrymaking of art will be possible. Considering the above context, the audience can be categorized into four types: the ordinary audience, the intellectual or humorous audience, the amorphous or intangible audience and the accustomed audience.

Ordinary Audience: This category has no distinct criteria. They listen to whatever they like to hear. Even if they don't like it but find a crowd somewhere, they participate with an eager heart. In other words, they do not know anything about music, but they bow their heads without understanding the appearance of others. If there is a movement of any rhythm, they naturally participate in it because rhythm is a natural sensuality of human feeling. In fact, this type of listener cannot evoke any particular reaction in the mind and cannot influence the mind of the listener. The ordinary audience is basically considered the inexperienced audience. One of their positive aspects is that exposure to relatively sensitive sounds makes them anxious. As a result, even if their job is only to increase the number of audiences, sometimes they create a good listener among them.

Intellectual or Humorous Audience: This type of audience occupies a special place in communication in art. They can be divided into three parts: intellectual or agreeable, humorist and artist. Intellectual or agreeable listeners are aware of all the nuances of music. It is true that they enjoy the song with an inner heart,

but if there is a mistake somewhere, that also comes under observation because they have been associated with music for a long time. They listen to music and extract its essence. The grammar of music is not so important to jocular listeners; they do not even find mistakes. They try to understand only the vein of the melody and the artist's meditation. In essence, they try to decant with the melody. They know how to take the real savor of music. How much the artist can connect the mood with the melody can be guessed just by looking at this humorous audience. On the other hand, there is another class of listeners who are knowledgeable and facetious as well as singers. That is, they know the details of the music, as well as how to sing, so they can enjoy its full flavor. As a result, this type of audience is intimately connected with the artist.

Amorphous or Intangible Audience: Basically, when the singer sings in self-absorption, there is no direct audience in front of them. And when singers sing through recording, there is no live audience. At that time, who listens to their music? Then the artist themselves becomes their audience. One's own audience means one's own song is sung to one's own purpose, and in the case of recording, it is assumed that someone will listen to it later. That is, both the means of transmission are amorphous. Those who indirectly listen to music on cassettes, CDs, mobiles or radios are formless listeners. On the other hand, sometimes the artist sings exclusively for God, and their God is intangible.

Accustomed audience: This category of listeners mainly goes to listen to the songs of their known or favorite singers. That is, they are used to listening to that singer's song. They go to listen to favorite songs again, even if the singer is not familiar or favorite. Mayer has an explanation in this context: "The listener's mind moves towards the possible course of the composition performed by the morpheme that the previously heard tunes instill in the listener's memory." (Banerjee, 1957, p. 110) As a result of habituation, the thought follows the sound signal at a relaxed pace, just as the melody follows the sound. Because of this, the music is very familiar to the ears of the accustomed listeners and creates a feeling of love. As a result, they also unite with the artist.

From the above review, it is clear that the artist sings in their own way, but the audience may have differences. They will do as much as they can extract. Among them is a special class of listeners- those who are knowledgeable, humorous, or singers themselves- and if an emotional connection is established, the artist may choose to sing especially for them. But if the artist starts singing to the audience at first, it often does not become music. Because art follows its own rules, if music rises to the level of art, it will automatically fascinate the audience, without having to sing separately to demand the attention of the audience. Because there are some ordinary listeners who unwittingly want to interfere with an artist's freedom, these damage both the musical environment and the mind of the artist. But there are also differing comments here. Where does the main purpose of art lie? Is music complete as an art without an audience or a listener? Does art achieve its purpose in expression itself or is there more?

There is an unwritten bond between the artist and the audience. Art requires not only expression but also enjoyment. Rabindranath Tagore sees the relationship between the artist and the listener in this way –

Music is the symposium point between the artist and the listener. The song is not the singers alone. If the singer sings through the open throat, another will whisper along with him. The connection between the two that will be established in music is beauty. This connection happens by itself. If one has a special need for the other, there will be no art; aesthetics is a deeper matter. The difference that occurs in this case is that the audience's special expectations surrounding the favorite artist are largely unable to properly evaluate the artist's performance. The opposite picture can also be observed - the artist on the stage observes the psychology of the audience and sometimes tries to perform music with the love of the audience in mind. (Tagore, 1392, p. 270)

Only entertainment purposes can be found in these two types of events. What the artist wants to do or what the audience wants to hear is a mutual understanding that is rooted in proficiency in classical music. When the pulse of sentiment dries up, art grows even, overpowering the sentiment. Then the proficiency in classical music becomes the greatest. But proficiency in classical music is only a part of the art. (Tagore, 1392) Therefore, the listener has an important role to play in art. A humorous audience can perceive it correctly.

In vocal music, it is the combined effort of elements (melody, verse, rhythm, gestures etc.), that can evoke a response in the audience. Again, the evaluation of the audience also carries some importance. Leo Tolstoy says, "When the viewer or the listener is stimulated by the emotion felt by the artist, then it is art" (Banerjee, 1957, p. 26). That is; after listening to a tune, the listener can evoke a different feeling in each person. In other words, creating art is the responsibility of the artist, but not the responsibility of making the listener understand. It is the responsibility of the listener to understand beauty and gain knowledge about this subject. There might be absolute pleasure. If the artist can truly present the power of melody there, certainly the audience will like it, because it is not possible to force the appreciation of art. Basically, two more reasons may make a performance appealing to the audience. Firstly, a tune that is compatible with the emptiness or restlessness of the listener's mind acts as a tonic for them. That is, the mood of the listener coincides with the urgency of the artist's tone, they feel happy. Secondly, the feeling of suddenly listening to or discovering something new is often a pleasant experience. The audience's expression at the end of the show indicates that they have gotten more than they expected. The expectations here mean limitations. This expectation is variable and relative from audience to audience. It is a psychological process that is largely experiential, which is not dependent on the audience's creativity. The form that occurs in North Indian classical music is determined by different ragas. Although in this case, the new sentiment for all Indian classical music is not suitable. If audiences don't know

about that sentiment of savor, they can never realize the real sap of feeling. Syed Manzurul Islam said about sensibility and sap:

If the feeling of beauty is conveyed in art, that feeling will arise in the mind of the recipient, and they will enjoy the taste of the art object. But there is no such thing as the sap expressed that will be transmitted to art or the mind of the art lover. This requires talent, experience, and preparation of chemistry. Even though the creation of sap is the purpose of art, like prosperity, since sap is more body-dependent than form, the process of human sentiment is much more individual-dependent. If there is a slight lapse in the artist's sense of moderation or if there is a slight slippage in the taste of the artist, the sap cannot be served in the right measure. (Islam, 2006, p. 37).

Now of visualization, the artist's thinking about the future consequences is the activity of their conscious mind. But just as many questions and apprehensions arise in the corners of the inquisitive mind when uncovering an unknown mystery, so when the attainment comes, the joy of its attainment evokes a special feeling. If the outcome is known beforehand or an artificial mystery is made of the available things, there is artificial pleasure available. Unwanted happiness or sadness, both are artistic, because the steps to find them arouse anxiety every moment, during many dangers, every time adding the urge to live anew and teaching thinking anew. All in all, the journey is a beauty of its own. Experienced and avid audiences accompany the artist and enjoy the beauty of this journey. That is, both the originator and the recipient share in this joy. In this context, Jaipur Gharana musician Pandit Ulhas Kashalkar said in the interview phase:

Embodiment of raga towards the audience's choice is totally inappropriate. The artists must perform with confidence in their own singing style. If the singer manages to create a fascinating moment, the audience will too. Because in the same event, the audience also liked Vidushi Parveen Sultana's song, Pandit Ajay Chakraborty's song, and Rashid Khan's song. (Kashalkar, 2025)

Namely, the listener is immersed in the insight that the music provides. A musician moves at their own pace and choice, taking the audience with them, not for the audience. If the artist feels joy in performing the raga and the real stimulation of the raga is released, then the audience is also satisfied with that flavor. Again, the same applies to music. The artist sings what he feels comfortable singing. If there is a disturbance, there is a possibility of deviating from the song; Hesitation does come in thinking whether it is good or not. If a singer performs music for commercial purposes, there is no touch of art. Sometimes there is a possibility of creating art when the artist has a change of heart, though that is rare. Leo Tolstoy has expressed: "Art is not an expression of human emotions, but a way to exchange human feelings with people" (Banerjee, 1957, pp. 43). The famous German musician Carl Philipp Bach (C. P. E. Bach),

with differing opinions, says- "The singer cannot impress others until they are themselves absorbed. So, to evoke emotion in the listener, all those emotions must be evoked in the singer, the one who transmits their feelings and most directly overwhelms them with the same emotion" (Banerjee, 1957, p:44). The famous Noble Laureate Poet Rabindranath Tagore said- "It is not the song of a single singer, but two people who meet / one opens their throat, the other whispers their mind" (Tagore, 1392). Those singers or musicians who come close to the listener or the audience feel a special impulse for communication, and those who compose music in the background have an imaginary connection with the audience. But if the artist, while overwhelming the audience, becomes overwhelmed by themselves, they are likely to lose control of their wisdom. Again, if the audience likes a particular moment, the artist will continue to perform with more energy. However, they can lose control over themselves and become egoistic. Become a real artist they have lived into it (Art form), must be some special quality will have to earn and proper express to audiences.

Man feels closeness to art through their nature and instinct. Musician Amiyaranjan Bandopadhyay stated that, "Music not only directly reveals the emotional being, but also overwhelms the listener at special moments.... The meditative form that the artist's melody develops fills the listener's mind with indescribable ecstasy" (Banerjee, 1957, pp. 54, 56). The dramatic impact that the listener experiences while listening to music is a special perception of the listener, and in this perception lies in the significance and excellence of music. In other words, music is promoted as art when it is appreciated after its release. That evaluator is the listener, who is not ordinary at all. Whether a singer or musician becomes an artist depends on their creativity, as well as audience-acceptance. When the appreciation or audience sentiments are transmitted, they return in multiples, keeping the art in vogue. The process of return occurs between the artist and the audience. The stimulation created by the artist's expression is carried in the brain by the audience for a long time; the singer also being constantly intoxicated with creation, but the listener stores it in the archive of the heart. The relationship between an artist and their audience in music is a dynamic and multifaceted exchange.

Some important things playing a special role between the artist and the audience to make a performance great are mentioned below –

1. **Communication:** An artist communicates with the audience not through their personal identity but through music. This communication takes place through the tune. The artist creates the tune, and the listener realizes it deeply. Whether the audience likes the tone of the artist's music is determined by the atmosphere of the time, which is created by both the artist and the audience.
2. **Connection and Engagement:** A successful performance creates an unwritten connection between the artist and the audience. This connection is emotional, psychological and spiritual. A spiritual

relationship is established between the artist and the audience during the performance of music. An enthusiastic audience can also make the artist realize the success of his/her performances in many ways. Artists sometimes align themselves with the audience to match each other.

3. **Feedback:** An audience provides feedback to an artist through various responses. They reach out to the artist through body posture, hand claps, complimentary words, or subtle facial expressions. Even silence is a feedback medium that gives immediate feedback about the artist's performance and evokes the artist's response. But from intimate solo performance to large scale concerts the dynamic is constantly shifting.
4. **Shared Experience:** Both the artist and the audience get a unique experience through a live performance. The artist is delighted to be able to express some of the knowledge they have acquired through their long-standing practice and pursuits and share it with the audience. On the other hand, the audience also gets to know many new things, rediscovers old ideas, and adds beautiful memories to the experience. The audience also becomes more experienced.
5. **Mutual Influence:** There can never be a one-sided relationship between the artist and the audience. Sometimes the response of the audience affects the performance of the artist, and the artist also tries to bring some consistency to his/her performance. This interplay gives perfection to a performance. Although not all changes are beautiful, they may occur in some cases.
6. **Evolution in the digital era:** With the rise of social media and streaming platforms, the artist-audience relationship has evolved. Artists now have more direct ways to interact with their fans, and audiences have greater access to music and artists' information. There is an option to choose their likings for a singer. They can't see each other but the listener can articulate their emotions by using emoji and comment. So, an artist can easily feel the vibration about his/her own performance.

The above points have been categorized into a few specific topics that relate to the relationship between the artist and the audience. This cannot be said to apply equally to all types of music. The response pattern is the same for a sitting song, one for a folk music show and completely different for an open-air concert. On the other hand, there are different expressions and reactions depending on the country and region. Not only musical programs, the audience of Theatre, Cinema or Dance programs carry different connections with artists. For example, BGM (Background Music) is the most important part of a cinema. It helps to boost the emotion of the audience to relate the actual scene with artist's expression. This communication is not really between artists and audience, but this proves that

music is a language that is the most important medium of communication. As a result, no matter what the medium of art- the relation is more precious between artist and audience, and it makes the art expressive.

CONCLUSION

Art is not a neutral or static field- it is a dynamic and often contested space where meaning, identity, power, and emotion intersect. While it can uplift and enlighten, it can also exclude and manipulate. The artist, once revered as a solitary genius, must now be seen within broader systems of culture, politics, and economy. Audience is the relator of every sector of art. Artist informed every situation by the audience, because social scenario, change of tastes, modernism- every changes reflect by audience's expression, their comments and their choices. But it varies depending on subject of Art.

In all cases, the audience certainly has an important role, but not everywhere. Especially in Eastern and Western classical music, instrumental music, these things are never dependent on the audience. The artist tries to unite the audience with their practice, thought and affection. What the audience wants is less important in the performance, but more focused on what the artist can invent. Lack of practice, lack of focus, lack of proper environment, or interruption by self-absorption means the artist's performance cannot reach the heart of the listener. As a result, the performance is never successful. Open-air concerts are open to the public. It is reasonable to call those performances, and those who perform are performers. The performance is completed by the singer and the audience, where there are other activities alongside the song. For example, artists perform gestures or dances in addition to singing, spreading enthusiasm among the audience, interacting with the instrumentalist and the audience between songs, taking pictures etc. In short, songs performed together for the entertainment of the listener or spectator can only be called entertainment, but there is no artistry. Western-style songs or music for an accustomed audience are always sung with the intention of listening to the listener. As a result, for that purpose the program is successful here. But the main purpose of art is to create a real audience. They are then divided into different genres of music according to the parameters of the listener's taste and liking. Not all music should be great as art. Some music needs to be pure entertainment. But mixing content whether for one or for the audience defeats the purpose. Besides, there is love, joy, and sadness in the songs of the audience- when the artist and the audience are immersed in the same atmosphere of the melody and the words, the real aesthetics come. The audience is also different from artist to artist. In essence, the artist-audience relationship is a vital element of musical experience, contributing to its richness and depth. The study of audience reception and artistic interpretation remains a dynamic field of inquiry. This article contributes to this discourse by highlighting how audience perception, cultural background, and historical context shape the artistic experience. Aligning with established theories, it reinforces the notion that art is a collaborative process between creators and viewers, where meaning is fluid and ever evolving.

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