

The Phenomenology in the Music of Debussy through Inspiration of Western and Oriental Culture

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Abstract : Music aesthetics related to phenomenology is rarely discussed and still in the ascendant while multi-dimensional discourses of philosophy were emerged to be an important trend in the 20th century. In the present study, a basic theory of phenomenology from Edmund Husserl (1859-1938) is revealed and discussed followed by the introduction of intentionality concepts, eidetic reduction, horizon, world, and inter-subjectivity issues. Further, phenomenology of music and general art was brought to attention by the introduction of Roman Ingarden's *The Work of Music and the Problems of its Identity* (1933) and Mikel Dufrenne's *The Phenomenology of Aesthetic Experience* (1953). Finally, Debussy's music will be analyzed and discussed from the perspective of phenomenology. Phenomenology is not so much a methodology or analytics rather than a common belief. That is, as much as possible to describe in detail the different human experience, relative to the object of purpose. Such idea has been practiced in various guises for centuries, only till the early 20th century Phenomenology was better refined through the works of Husserl, Heidegger, Sartre, Merleau-Ponty and others. Debussy was born in an age when the Western society began to accept the multi-cultural baptism. With his unusual sensitivity to the oriental culture, Debussy has presented considerable inspiration, absorption, and echo in his music works. In fact, his relationship with nature is far from echoing the idea of Chinese ancient literati and nature. Although he is not the first composer to associate music with human and nature, the unique quality and impact of his works enable him to become a significant figure in music aesthetics. Debussy's music tried to develop a quality analogous of nature, and more importantly, based on vivid life experience and artistic transformation to achieve the realm of pure art. Such idea that life experience comes before artwork, either clear or vague, simple or complex, was later presented abstractly in his late works is still an interesting subject worth further discussion. Debussy's music has existed for more than or close to a century. It has received musicology researcher's attention as much as other important works in the history of Western music. Among the pluralistic discussion about Debussy's art and ideas, phenomenological aesthetics has enlightened new ideas and view angles to relook his great works and even gave some previous arguments legitimacy. Overall, this article provides a new insight of Debussy's music from phenomenological exploration and it is believed phenomenology would be an important pathway in the research of the music aesthetics.

Keywords : Debussy's music, music esthetics, oriental culture, phenomenology

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