The Aesthetic Experience

Definition = Tendencies that are either fulfilled or denied. Great art is that which achieves an acceptable balance between fulfillment and denial across epochs. Too much fulfillment and I’m bored. Too much denial and I don’t understand.

Subjective Reality = Every part of the human experience that cannot be expressed in words. “There are no words to express... You just had to have been there.”

Creative Ability = Ability to manipulate the elements of an art medium to achieve the desired tendencies with their chosen fulfillment or denial. In music, this could be a composer creating, arranging, manipulating, composing, improvising, etc.

Perceptive Ability = The ability to perceive the manipulation of the elements to achieve an empathetic response to the fulfillment and denial of tendencies present in the work of art. For Music Education, the world of Art is significant because music educators can increase students’ Perceptive Abilities.

Art = All the ways and means people have contrived to organize materials to produce meanings inherent with the materials and their organization.

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Having the aesthetic experience while listening to… (Symphony 40). I can touch Mozart—Mozart’s subjective reality.

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Mozart creating… The aesthetic experience Mozart had in the creation of… (Symphony 40). We can know another human’s subjective reality and therefore be more human.

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We can know another human’s subjective reality and therefore be more human.
The aesthetic experience may be described as the response to anticipated tendencies that are either fulfilled or denied. Great art is that which achieves an acceptable balance between fulfillment and denial, which can also happen across eras. Too much fulfillment produces uniformity and boredom, and too much denial produces perplexity and misunderstanding. The artistic experience begins with a person’s subjective reality, that part of the human experience that cannot be expressed in words. This subjective reality, through a perceptive ability (the ability to perceive the inner workings of an art form), allows humans to become a part of other humans’ subjective realities, past and present; thereby, becoming more human.

The aesthetic experience is one in which a person may “experience” art beyond the constructs of language. Since music is the least discursive of all art forms, it therefore is unique in being the most direct channel for the expressing the verbally inexpressible. Music, taught through the aesthetic experience paradigm, affords students unique and valuable experiences.