

THE MONA LISA ANALOGY - ORCHESTRAS PAINT IN SOUND AND TIME



Leonardo da Vinci's - 'MONA LISA'

Imagine that the role of the orchestral performer is to *recreate* the 'Mona Lisa'.

They would have to be keenly aware of the following:

The overall form in which it is painted

The wooden surface it is painted on.

The understanding of natural colours derived from plants.

The translucence of the skin textures.

The understanding of distance and perspective –

The detailed folds in clothing.

The enigmatic smile – if indeed it is a smile.

Now imagine that the performers are to recreate the Mona Lisa in a proscribed amount of time. Let's say two hours. They must work passionately to recreate as exact a version as they can – in public – under scrutiny, without ever making a mistake, without redoing or reworking any part. They must work in absolute silence i.e. without verbal instructions or talking between them, of any kind.

Just as painters jealously guard their art until the unveiling of the *completed* work, so it is with performances in western classical music. The performers paint in sound and time, and **noise of any kind** and **clapping**, even to show appreciation, would be similar to the audience throwing up bright, unwanted paint onto the canvass while the painting is under production. Most symphonies have four movements – most concerti have three. **For the enjoyment of your fellow audience members, please refrain from making any noise and though we love your applause, please hold your enthusiasm until the end of the piece! Thank you!**