



Music Printing

The Future

BEN FINN:

One of the latest developments in writing and publishing music which has happened really since about the year 2000 is internet publishing. Now what this means is that instead of someone producing a score and selling it in music shops or by sending it out to people they know, it is now possible to put a piece of music directly on to the internet, which other people can go and look at on the screen, they can play it back they can maybe even change the key or change the instruments and then they can print it out. So really this means that people are doing the printing stage of the music themselves using their own printer instead of it being done on the printing press. This also enables publishers and composers to reach an audience right around the world almost instantly, at extremely low cost.

JONATHAN FINN:

Looking a little further ahead there's been talk in the past of a paperless office, and so on, and the application of this of music is writing a piece of music that starts life on a computer screen and ends life on a computer screen on a kind of electronic music stand. Now these objects don't quite exist yet but we get phoned up about twice a week by someone who says I've got a brilliant idea and we always know what the idea is, if you were to get a flat screen, maybe an LCD screen, and you could have an orchestra with these screens in front of them and play directly off the score and maybe if it's a new piece of music corrections could be made very rapidly or the conductor could make corrections and they'd be instantly be transmitted to the whole orchestra. The problem is a screen can malfunction but a piece of paper on a normal stand can't.

BEN FINN:

Further off into the future a development which may arise perhaps due to developments in artificial intelligence is that the computer instead of acting as a passive tool which merely sits there allowing you to think of the notes and it simply writing them down, the computer may increasingly assist with writing the music either perhaps in terms of skills like orchestration and arranging for which there are fairly well known rules or it may be possible for the computer to become more creative and actually assist in the composing process. The person using the programme will simply be sitting there listening to what the computer produces and may be choosing what's best, and what's not quite so good.

JONATHAN FINN:

We both use Sibelius ourselves for composing on and I personally don't regard the prospect of a programme actually helping you write music as being necessarily a negative thing. It has to be said that programmes already remove a certain amount of the drudgery from tasks like repeating notes layout and so on and this could be extended to the creative process itself. There are things like aspects of orchestration and arranging, which are effectively repetitive tasks that we learn at school and a programme could certainly help with that.

BEN FINN:

Yes I think as long as the, the final decision on the notes is left up to the human then it really doesn't matter how much of the process is done by the computer.