Hearing Emerson, Lake, and Palmer Anew: Progressive Rock as "Music of Attractions"

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> Everybody knows Classical-Rock (alternating with -Jazz) Fusions never really work. Perhaps what really paved the astroturf for ELP was *2001*, that dopey cozzed collegiate smoker flick: not only did it star a computer that could kick ass on Keith E.'s in a microsputum, but crafty Kubrick saw sure the soundtrack was fattened with all the glorioski Classicorn any rube could swallow. "Also Sprach Zarathustra," and Keith Emerson heard the word just like he was Joseph Smith shoveling off the tablets. By the time Kubrick got to *Clockwork Orange*, thereby installing Beethoven in the prostate projection chamber of next-up fad of trendy androhoodlum, the insidious befoulment of all that was gutter pure in rock had been accomplished. It's worse than eclecticism, it's eugenic entropy by design, and Emerson and cohorts are more than mere fellow travelers.
>
> —Lester Bangs, rock critic, 1974[1]

> Progressive rock serves as a forum in which a number of cultural opposites are reconciled: high and low culture, European and African American creative ideals. In the best progressive rock, one senses the tension that results from attempting to balance these values. When either the intellectualization of classical music or the unbridled energy of rock gets the upper hand, the tension vanishes and the music loses its power, becoming either middle-brow classical music or flaccid, unenergetic rock.
>
> —Edward Macan, music professor, 1997[2]

Progressive rock is a loose label for music that combines some of the basic ingredients of early rock 'n' roll and elements of genres that are generally considered more prestigious, such as Western art music, jazz, and Indian classical music. After emerging in the late 1960s, progressive rock reached its peak in popularity in the early 1970s. Since the rise of punk in the mid 1970s, the genre has retreated to the college circuit, select clubs, and fringe festivals.

Over the past quarter century, there have been two common stances on progressive rock. One builds upon rock critics' longstanding and overwhelmingly negative view of the genre. For most critics, such as Dave Marsh and Lester Bangs, the most important element of rock is the rather ambiguous concept of "authenticity." Theoretically, "authenticity" is connected with genuineness. A song is "authentic" when it is written (or at least arranged) by the performing musicians, and is about their lives and emotions. Although

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songwriting credits are easily conveyed, this notion of authenticity is not particularly useful in criticism. After all, how would a critic know whether or not the feelings expressed in a song are genuine? In practice, many critics track authenticity with more obvious qualities: a sense of rebelliousness, the inclusion of blues elements such as blues progressions and extended vocal melismas, and subtle inflections of the beat.[3] Given these criteria, the negative critical reception of progressive rock—exemplified by the strongly worded Lester Bangs quote above—is hardly surprising. After all, progressive rock musicians diluted the influence of blues in rock music by incorporating elements of many other genres. They also took away the sexuality and rebelliousness often heard in rock's hard-driving beat, replacing it with complex meters that are not suited to dancing.

Over the past decade, a number of popular music scholars, such as Edward Macan (1997) and Kevin Holm-Hudson (2002b), have begun to attack this critical dismissal of progressive rock, leading to the second common stance. Although these scholars have widely divergent views about the genre, most of them share the following contention: namely, that progressive rock is most successful when elements of "high culture" and "low culture" are carefully balanced and held in tension with each other. Edward Macan asserts this view in the quote above, and is echoed by John Covach in his analysis of progressive rock band Yes's recording *Close to the Edge*:

> "Close to the Edge" pushes at the stylistic boundary of 1970s rock by evoking the world of classical music, but ultimately it does not cross over into that world. It is, rather, the maintenance of this very tension between these two widely disparate styles that accounts for the compelling aesthetic effect of "Close to the Edge"; a reconciliation of these forces that would attempt to securely place the piece in either the world of rock music or that of art music would surely weaken the dynamic effect of the song. (Covach 1997:23)

In this article, my aim is not to dispute the fact that some progressive rock songs derive their appeal from the conflict between the high and the low—that is, the friction created when elements of more prestigious genres are mixed with the basic ingredients of rock. Rather, I argue that, since this analytical method fails to explain the allure of some of progressive rock's most popular and influential works, an alternate approach that focuses on "presentness" and the "moment" can bring forth a more complete understanding of the genre. Here, I will first analyze one of these "troublesome" works—Emerson, Lake, and Palmer's (ELP) *Pictures at an Exhibition*—and examine the piece in relation to the writings of one of the most prominent literary and cultural critics during the height of progressive rock's popularity, Susan Sontag. Sontag's writings are useful because she suggests an alternative

to formal analysis and hermeneutics, the two main methodologies employed by progressive rock scholars (and musicologists in general) and that have thus far produced an incomplete view of the genre. In my conclusion, I will present an analytic metaphor for progressive rock based on the concept of "the cinema of attractions," an idea developed by film scholar Tom Gunning to describe the dominant mode of film-viewing in the earliest days of cinema. Given the similarities between early film and progressive rock, I argue that Gunning's concept can improve our understanding of the genre.

The Worlds of ELP's *Pictures at an Exhibition*

In 1970, three established stars from the early days of progressive rock joined together to form one of the most important "supergroups" of the 1970s.[4] The de facto leader of this trio was keyboardist Keith Emerson. Emerson received early training in classical piano, and during the early 1960s, played in various jazz ensembles and bar bands where he developed a longstanding passion for arranging classical music for jazz and rock combos. During short stints with the T-Bones and the VIPs, he began to work on his trademark organ destruction routine which involves throwing an organ around and sticking knives into it to generate both feedback noise and enthusiastic audience reaction. Later Emerson achieved stardom as the keyboardist of The Nice. The bassist and lead singer of ELP, Greg Lake, received some guitar lessons in his youth, and played in a number of semi-professional bands during the mid-and-late 1960s. In 1969, he achieved fame as bassist and vocalist of King Crimson. Drummer Carl Palmer had played in various dance bands since the age of twelve, and dropped out of school a few years later to become a professional drummer. After short periods with the King Bees, the Thunderbirds, and the Crazy World of Arthur Brown, Palmer formed the progressive rock band Atomic Rooster in 1969.

During the summer of 1970, Emerson, Lake, and Palmer began rehearsing their first live concert and album. The band's initial repertory included pieces from the members' previous bands (e.g., The Nice's "Rondo"—which contains a lengthy quotation of Bach's D Minor Toccata and Fugue, BWV 565, and King Crimson's "21st Century Schizoid Man"), original songs (e.g., "Take a Pebble" and "Tank") and what I will call "free transcriptions" of classical music (e.g., "The Barbarian" and "Knife-Edge," which are based on Bartók's *Allegro barbaro* and Janáček's *Sinfonietta*, respectively).[5]

Pictures at an Exhibition, a thirty-five-minute "free transcription" of Mussorgsky's piano suite of the same name, was undoubtedly the magnum opus of ELP's first summer, though it is also a work that occupies an awkward place in the group's overall repertory. On the one hand, *Pictures* was and

remains the band's signature work. Premiered at their first concert in August 1970, this extravagant piece was performed in whole or in part at every ELP concert until 1998. On the other hand, the band felt that *Pictures* was "not primarily ELP's own work," and had mixed feelings about releasing an audio recording of the piece (Forrester, Hanson and Askew 2001:69). Of the 1972 LP release of *Pictures*, Emerson stated, "we don't look on it as a third album . . . just a good vibe" (quoted in Forrester et al. 2001:71).

It is not immediately clear why the band had such mixed feelings about *Pictures*. When Emerson was a member of The Nice, he had no qualms about releasing recordings of semi-strict transcriptions of classical works, such as "Brandenburger" and the "Intermezzo from Sibelius's *Karelia Suite*." More significantly, ELP's first album included "The Barbarian" (their semi-strict transcription of Bartók's *Allegro barbaro*). Perhaps the band's views were influenced by the overwhelming popularity of Ravel's orchestration of Mussorgsky's piano work—they may have wished to avoid Ravel's shadow. Or they may have thought of their rendition as more of a music appreciation project than as an original album. Lake once said, "If they [our fans] can enjoy *Pictures at an Exhibition* by us, it's just as good as them enjoying *Pictures* by Mussorgsky. In fact, a lot of people get to hear it that never would otherwise" (quoted in Bangs 2002:51). Similarly, Emerson asserted, "I wanted to use [*Pictures*] sort of as an educational piece, exposing our audiences to this great work of classical music" (quoted in Forrester et al. 2001:68).[6]

The band's ambivalence about *Pictures* is reflected in recent scholars' criticism of this work. While Bill Martin dismisses the work entirely by stating that he "would rather hear the original" (Martin 1998:199), Paul Stump provides a half-hearted reevaluation. He writes:

> The cavil that ELP were, like those orchestral-rock pioneers of the late 1960s, attempting to "improve" Mussorgsky's work, is neither borne out by contemporary testimony nor by observance of the facts. Mussorgsky's suite had been for years adapted by the great and humble alike in numerous configurations. That Emerson should have tried to join their ranks cannot be criticized *per se*. In fact, the varying dynamics of the reprises of the big "Promenade" tune—even with ghastly lyrics appended to it in one instance—are intelligent and tasteful. (Stump 1997: 99–100)[7]

Meanwhile, Allan Moore expresses his uncertainty about which critical approaches would best serve ELP's *Pictures*:

> On side 1, Lake's "The sage," with its simple acoustic guitar accompaniment, is an uneasy song that maintains the tension of the side, but its pacing is slow, continuing the contrast set up between the opening "Promenade" and "The gnome." This tension is relaxed only by "Blues Variations."

> On side 2, "The hut of Baba Yaga" fulfils a similar function, resulting in the triumphal grandeur of "The great gates of Kiev." This works well in Moussorgsky's original, but because ELP have excised much of the material, and thus changed the proportions, the triumphalism seems inadequately prepared. But this criticism results from the application of "art" standards. Should one look only at individual songs, without relating them? They are clearly related through links in performance. To insist on considering them separately would do violence to the manner of presentation. This album, then, seems to demand the application of criteria derived from art music, to a certain extent, but it seems to set the limit at which these criteria are useful. (Moore 2001:91)

Moore suggests that, while there is some large-scale accumulation of tension and subsequent release on side one of the original *Pictures at an Exhibition* LP, no long-term planning is detectable on side two. He is uncertain of whether the lack of tension on side two results from inadequacies in the work, or whether his expectations for connections to exist between different movements of a progressive rock suite are simply misplaced. Since there are no breaks between the various movements on side two, Moore is left thinking that there must be some sort of large-scale structure in place, but he is ultimately unable to determine what that structure might be.

An Analysis of ELP's *Pictures at an Exhibition*

Moore's observations about ELP's *Pictures*, as inconclusive as they are, point to a central problem in progressive rock scholarship. His interest in this work and his voluminous writings on the genre demonstrate that he does not subscribe to rock critics' outright dismissal of this music. At the same time, he recognizes that progressive rock scholars' focus on large-scale tension and resolution patterns fails to illuminate some of the most important pieces in the genre. What is needed is a third approach, and it is with this in mind that I undertake the following analysis.

ELP's *Pictures* is a sprawling eleven-movement work that contains strict and free transcriptions of Mussorgsky's original, variations on themes by Mussorgsky, and original ELP material (see figure 1). It opens with a forceful but somewhat clunky performance of Mussorgsky's opening Promenade on a Hammond organ. On the last chord of this movement, Carl Palmer enters with a short drum solo that serves as a bridge to "The Gnome."

Mussorgsky's "Gnomus" was inspired by a painting of a nutcracker with a shrieking and waddling gnome. It contains three main motives: a scurrying idea in octaves (ex. 1), a "shrieking" melody that descends from the upper register (ex. 2), and an ominous waddling theme (ex. 3). At the beginning of the movement, Mussorgsky juxtaposes the first two motives. In

Figure 1: An Outline of ELP's *Pictures at an Exhibition.*

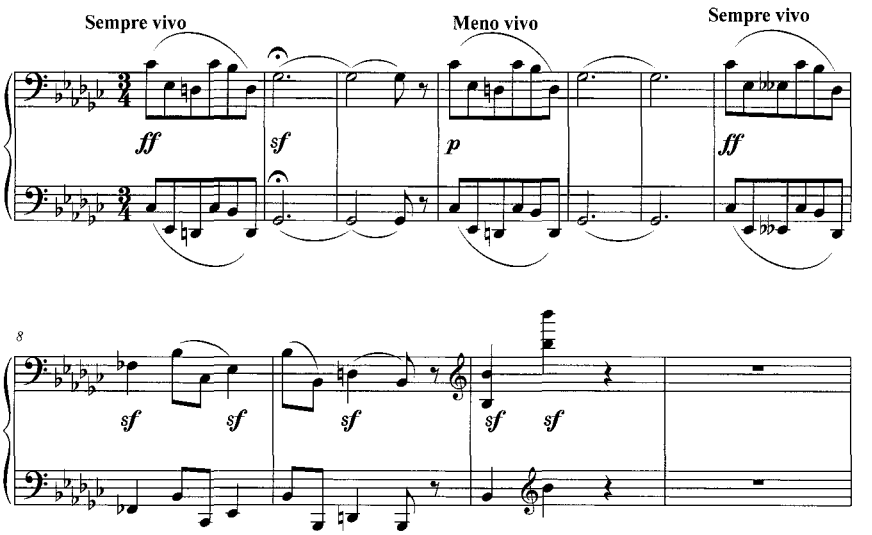
Movement	Title	Type of Transcription
1	Promenade	Strict transcription
2	The Gnome	Semi-strict and free transcriptions
3	Promenade	Strict transcription, lyrics added
4	The Sage	Original ELP material
5	The Old Castle	Original ELP material
6	Blues Variations	Variations on Mussorgsky and Bill Evans
7	Promenade	Strict transcription
8	The Hut of Baba Yaga	Semi-strict transcription
9	The Curse of Baba Yaga	Variations on Mussorgsky
10	The Hut of Baba Yaga	Semi-strict transcription
11	The Great Gates of Kiev	Semi-strict transcription, lyrics added

the middle section, the ominous waddling theme dominates, but it is constantly interrupted by the scurrying idea. The gnome gives off an extended shriek in the last section.

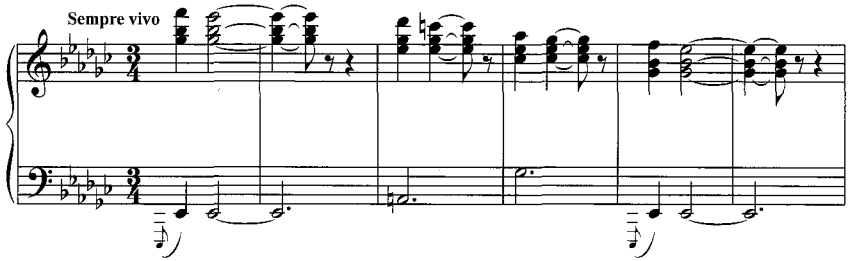
ELP's version of "Gnomus" retains the overall form of Mussorgsky's original. It begins as a semi-strict transcription. This opening section, with its juxtaposition of extremely fast motion and silence, is as far away from the world of popular music as progressive rock gets. When the ominous waddling theme enters, however, the movement is transformed into a rock fantasia. Carl Palmer plays a heavy rock beat on the drums, and the interruptions that characterize the original take the form here of short drum solos. The final section is a semi-strict transcription with a twist: the trills in the lower register of the original are now played on a synthesizer that sounds like a pitched wind machine. In a little over four minutes, ELP's version of "The Gnome" gives the listener glimpses of three musical worlds: it starts with a quick glance at the world of art music, and turns to the world of rock in the middle section. At the end, it peeks into the world of modern electronic music. "The Gnome" is followed by a semi-strict transcription of Mussorgsky's second Promenade. Here, the melody is set to Greg Lake's typically obscure lyrics about the ambiguities of life and the passage of time.

The fourth through sixth movements are each based in different ways on Mussorgsky's "The Old Castle," itself an imaginary troubadour song inspired by a painting the composer saw of a medieval French castle. The fourth movement, "The Sage," is an original song by Greg Lake, but it shares the premise of Mussorgsky's movement. As Emerson recalls, "Greg had the idea of the minstrel singing underneath the castle" (quoted in Forrester et

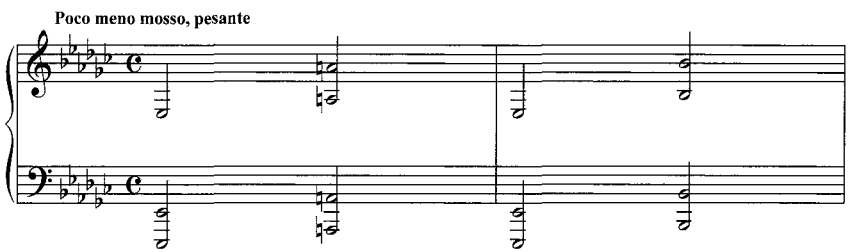
Example 1: Mussorgsky, *Pictures at an Exhibition*, "Gnomus," Opening Theme.



Example 2: Mussorgsky, *Pictures at an Exhibition*, "Gnomus," "Shrieking" Melody.



Example 3: Mussorgsky, *Pictures at an Exhibition*, "Gnomus," "Waddling" Theme.

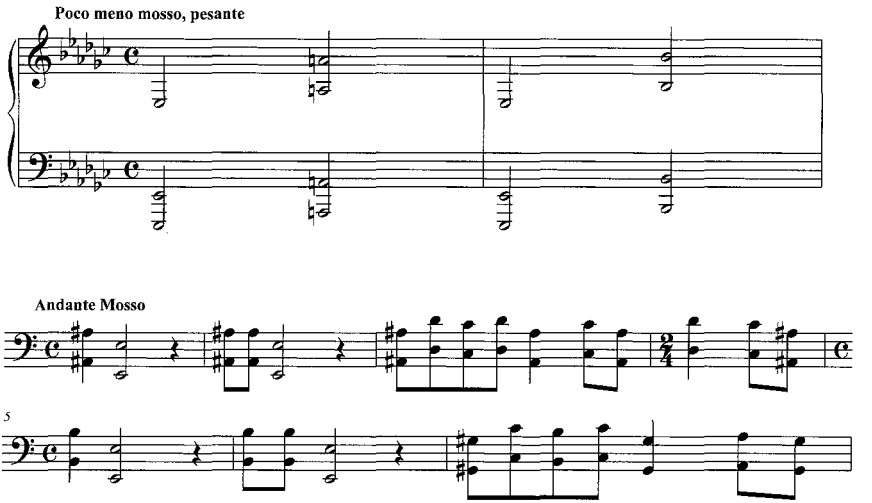


al. 2001:189). The movement opens with an introduction on Emerson's synthesizers. This introduction uses material from the song's verses, but the strange harmonic turns and biting dissonances seem to place this introduction in the world of early twentieth-century Western art music. As Emerson's synthesizers fade out, Lake—accompanying himself on an acoustic guitar—sings two verses in a style that recalls singer-songwriters of the early 1970s. After this, he plays an extended acoustic guitar solo that evokes the figuration, cadential patterns, and dance rhythms of Baroque music before completing the movement with the last verse of the song. In the end, "The Sage" is similar to "The Gnome" in that both songs present listeners with three different musical worlds in just over four minutes.

The fifth movement, "The Old Castle," is only tenuously connected to Mussorgsky's original. It opens with an avant-garde section, during which Emerson showcases the sonic possibilities of the Moog ribbon controller.[8] Eventually, a rock beat is established and this leads to a virtuosic synthesizer solo that includes passing motivic and rhythmic references to Mussorgsky's "The Old Castle." The sixth movement, "Blues Variations," is the most traditionally structured multi-part movement discussed thus far. It is in an ABA form. The first A section presents an accelerated version of the main theme of Mussorgsky's "The Old Castle" over a textbook 12-bar blues progression, and five variations on this theme. In the B section, ELP plays an extended quotation from jazz pianist Bill Evans's piece *Interplay*. Although this section is noticeably more relaxed than the blues-rock style of the A section, the contrast is rather mild when compared with "The Gnome" and "The Sage." The movement closes with a second A section, which includes three additional variations on "The Old Castle" and a restatement of the theme.

Next, a strict transcription of Mussorgsky's opening Promenade for rock trio leads into three movements based on the penultimate movement of Mussorgsky's original. The eighth movement, the first with the title "The Hut of Baba Yaga," and the beginning of the ninth movement, "The Curse of Baba Yaga," are semi-strict transcriptions of the Allegro con brio and the first half of the Andante mosso sections of Mussorgsky's "The Hut on Fowls' Legs." Approximately one minute into "The Curse of Baba Yaga," the band suddenly breaks off into an all-out jam session. After Lake establishes a guitar ostinato, Palmer comes in with a heavy drum beat, and Emerson creates various strange electronic sounds. Later on, Emerson plays virtuosic licks on his sythesizers. Significantly, much of this jam is based on the first two measures of the ominous waddling theme from "The Gnome." This is perhaps a demonstration of the fact that the outline of the Andante mosso theme is the inversion of the first two measures of the ominous waddling theme (see ex. 4). The tenth movement, the second "The Hut of Baba

Example 4: Comparison of the "Waddling" Theme from "Gnomus" and the Andante Mosso Theme from "The Hut on Fowls' Legs."



Yaga," is a semi-strict transcription of the closing Allegro molto section of Mussorgsky's movement.

The last movement of ELP's *Pictures* is a fairly strict transcription of Mussorgsky's "The Great Gates of Kiev," the two major additions being Greg Lake's convoluted lyrics and Emerson's trademark organ destruction routine.

The "Presentness" of Progressive Rock

From this analysis, it is clear that eclecticism is a salient feature of ELP's *Pictures*. The work borrows elements of Baroque music, late nineteenth- and early twentieth-century Western art music, modern jazz, blues-rock, psychedelic rock, and modern electronic music. To some extent, this stylistic heterogeneity is unexceptional; many works composed in the 1960s and 1970s include elements of numerous styles. What is unique about ELP's *Pictures* and only a handful of other progressive rock pieces is the frequency of style changes: until the last movement, ELP's *Pictures* rarely stays in one style for more than two minutes.[9]

The above analysis also explains why ELP's *Pictures* is frequently dismissed by progressive rock scholars. Most of these scholars believe that the success of a progressive rock piece depends on negotiating the conflicting demands of art music and popular music. Judged by this criterion, ELP's

Pictures must be considered a failure. Except for the middle section of "The Gnome" and the jam session of "The Curse of Baba Yaga," where the heavy rock beat is opposed by the dissonant harmonies characteristic of late nineteenth-century art music, this piece is simply a succession of short movements in easily recognizable styles. No attempt is made to accommodate different styles simultaneously to form a coherent whole. The A section of "Blues Variations" is not a complicated hybrid of high art and low art; it is simply in a 1960s/70s British blues-rock style. Moreover, these passages do not seem to build towards a climax in a forthcoming movement, or resolve tension generated in previous sections. The B section of "Blues Variations" sounds like modern jazz and not some sort of intricate jazz-rock mix. If anything, styles are being juxtaposed successively, not blended all at once. Similarly, the "Promenade" sections and "The Hut of Baba Yaga" sound much more like Western art music played on a synthesizer, guitar and drums than a fusion of the highbrow and the lowbrow. In short, ELP's stylistic heterogeneity seems to follow not from a desire to create a new type of music balancing elements of classical and popular music in tension with each other, but rather, from a wish to make stylistic references—to quote Arnold Whittall's discussion of Thomas Adès's *Arcadiana*—"without any hang-ups" because the band "finds it pleasurable to do so" (Whittall 2003:5).

The popularity of ELP's *Pictures* demonstrates that many progressive rock fans shared ELP's pleasure in hearing an eclectic mix of stylistic allusions. As I have already mentioned, this work was performed on every concert the band gave during its first twenty-eight years of existence. The first film of the band features a performance of this work, and the original *Pictures* LP reached No. 3 on the album charts in Britain (Forrester et al. 2001:71). Even the title of Keith Emerson's recent autobiography, *Pictures of an Exhibitionist* (2003), recognizes the centrality of this work to his life and career.

The divergence between the views of fans and scholars is perhaps not surprising, and seems to stem from the fact that, while the writings of most recent progressive rock scholars are colored by the authors' training in Western art music, during the 1970s most of the genre's fans probably had only limited knowledge of that tradition.[10] Many scholars insist, for example, that progressive rock is "listening" music, rather than "dancing" or "participatory" music. Yet even a quick survey of live audio and video recordings of progressive rock concerts during the early 1970s reveals that audiences sway their bodies during the more dance-like sections. They applaud, whistle, and scream not only at the end of self-contained sections, but whenever they like what they hear. On the original recording of ELP's *Pictures*, one hears cheers, shrieks, and whistles every time Emerson explores

strange electronic sounds. The fans are not just listening: they participate in the music making by urging Emerson to create ever stranger sounds. This is especially true when he destroys the organ in the middle of "The Great Gates of Kiev."

The actions of progressive rock musicians and fans suggest that, for them, the allure of the genre is based more upon its ever-changing, channel-surfing quality than upon stylistic tension generated by the use of high and low musical styles. Numerous bands happily played excerpts of large-scale works (including ELP's *Pictures* and Jethro Tull's *Thick as a Brick*) at concerts and released relatively self-contained sections of suites as singles.[11] Meanwhile, fans freely interrupted the flow of the music to show their appreciation of specific moments or brief sections; they seem to be much more concerned about what they are hearing in the present moment than about the interaction of different sections or musical elements across larger spans of time.

Significantly, this emphasis on "presentness" was an important component of late 1960s counterculture.[12] In his seminal work *Profane Culture*, ethnographer Paul Willis writes,

> The hippies insisted on the importance of subjective experience and of the "now." The past had always had disappointments and the future threatened with "objectives" and "plans" which might discredit their belief in something beyond. (Willis 1978:90)

More important for my purpose is Sontag's 1964 article "Against Interpretation" (published in 1966) which calls for a greater emphasis on "presentness" in art criticism. Sontag argues that postindustrial consumer culture, with its loud noises and constant information overload, has a negative effect on our ability to feel. She states, "ours is a culture based on excess, on overproduction; the result is a steady loss of sharpness in our sensory experience. All the conditions of modern life—its material plenitude, its sheer crowdedness—conjoin to dull our sensory faculties" (1966:14). For this reason, she contends that one of the main tasks for contemporary critics is to promote a more spontaneous and anti-intellectual approach to arts appreciation:

> What is important now is to recover our senses. We must learn to *see* more, to *hear* more, to *feel* more. Our task is not to find the maximum amount of content in a work of art . . . Our task is to cut back content so that we can see the thing at all. (1966:14)

In regard to music, this approach dictates that we concern ourselves less with traditional analytical issues such as large-scale form and motivic development, and place a greater analytical emphasis on the musical surface,

visceral effects, and elements such as timbre and texture.[13] In analyses of ELP's *Pictures*, explorations of when the Moog ribbon controller generated crowd reaction, or how the heavy drumbeats made fans bop their heads might lead to a better understanding of progressive rock.

Progressive Rock and "The Cinema of Attractions"

With Sontag's plea in mind, let us return to Moore's ambivalence about ELP's *Pictures* (quoted above). On the one hand, he indicates that ELP's *Pictures* "seems to demand the application of criteria derived from art music," but on the other hand, he realizes that, if he were to judge the work solely in terms of art music standards and expectations, he would have to deem it a failure.

Here Moore pinpoints the central problem for analysts of progressive rock: to date, analyses of progressive rock songs have focused on the big picture. Many scholars have carefully analyzed the multi-movement suites, the extremely ambiguous lyrics, and the bizarre cover art in an attempt to decipher the meanings of specific progressive rock songs (see, for example Covach 1997, Macan 1997, Covach 2000, Cotner 2002, and Holm-Hudson 2002a).

While this important scholarship admittedly provides many valuable insights and has created many new progressive rock fans (including myself), I propose that this scholarly search for large-scale patterns and meanings has distorted our understanding of the genre. I suggest that, for many 1970s progressive rock musicians and fans, the details and the moment are more important than the whole.

In the interest of understanding this genre better, I would like to invoke a concept from film scholarship: the "cinema of attractions." This term, originally put forth by film scholar Tom Gunning in the early 1980s, describes the dominant mode of filmmaking before 1908. Gunning argues that, although some of the earliest films do progress through an overall narrative, story-telling is not their main appeal. Rather, the main focus is on spectacle and novelty.[14] He states that, whereas narrative film—the dominant mode of filmmaking for much of the last century—depends upon "a desire for an (almost) endlessly delayed fulfillment and a cognitive involvement in pursuing an enigma," early film "arouses a curiosity that is satisfied by surprise rather than narrative suspense" (Gunning 2004:44).

A classic example of a film participating in the "cinema of attractions" is George Méliès's 1902 masterpiece *Le Voyage dans la lune* (*A Trip to the Moon*). What makes this film interesting is not so much its ridiculous story—a cannon shoots a spaceship carrying several astronomers to the moon, the astronomers are captured by lunar inhabitants, and later make

their escape and return safely to Earth. Rather, its appeal is based on stunning visual effects and originality of situation (e.g., the notion that a spaceship can be shot out of a large cannon), and the many surprises for the viewer (e.g., the moon's human face, the spaceship's crash landing in the moon's "eye," and the huge lobster-like object protecting the ruler of the moon's inhabitants).

Like these early films, progressive rock suites often tell stories. While some of these are lighthearted and simple, many others, including ELP's *Tarkus*, Yes's *Close to the Edge*, Genesis's *Selling England by the Pound* and Pink Floyd's *Dark Side of the Moon* tackle serious issues such as alienation, commercialism, the perils of technology, and the meaning of life. However serious the lyrics, though, the allure of progressive rock (like that of Méliès's *Le Voyage dans la lune*) is rarely the story that the songs tell. Instead, what drives the genre are the details: the surprising sounds, the sudden stylistic shifts, and the stunning virtuosity of the performers. More attention to these elements can allow us a better appreciation for the wide variety of works in the progressive rock canon.

Notes

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1. This quotation excerpted from Bangs (2002:50).

2. This quotation excerpted from Macan (1997:165).

3. The connection between blues elements and authenticity is discussed by numerous authors, including Moore (2001a:73ff.) and Pratt (1986).

4. "Supergroup" is the term for bands made up of established stars. For a more comprehensive biography of the group, see Forrester, Hanson and Askew (2001).

5. In this article, I will differentiate between three types of transcription. "Strict transcription" refers to transcriptions that contain little or no change to the original melodies, harmonies, rhythms, and forms. "Semi-strict transcription" refers to transcriptions with a small number of major changes to the original melodies, harmonies, rhythms and forms. "Free transcription" refers to transcriptions with numerous changes to the original melodies, harmonies, rhythms and forms. In some cases, "free transcriptions" are better understood as original compositions than as transcriptions.

6. Given that ELP kept playing *Pictures at an Exhibition* at every concert until 1998, some commentators have questioned the sincerity of ELP's supposed ambivalence about the work. See Bangs 2002:50–55.

7. Among the many transcriptions of Mussorgsky's *Pictures* are orchestrations by Maurice Ravel, Leopold Stokowski, Sergei Gortschakow, and Vladimir Ashkenazy. There are also transcriptions for brass quintet (Elgar Howarth), synthesizer (Isao Tomita), solo guitar (Kazuhito Yamashita), forty-four grand pianos and one prepared piano (Wilhelm Plate), and many other instrumental combos.

8. A ribbon controller is a device that uses the movement of the player's finger to control voltage changes. Although this device can be used to modulate many different parameters, it is most often associated with pitch bending. Emerson used ribbon controllers built by famed electronic instrument inventor Robert Moog (1934–2005).

9. Other examples exhibiting this stylistic variety include Yes's *The Gates of Delirium* and ELP's *Tarkus*.

10. For example, Durrell Bowman states unequivocally in a recent essay that the "vast majority" of progressive rock's references to art music "went largely undetected—or at least underappreciated—by fans" (2002:186).

11. For example, Yes's "Soon" is an excerpt of *The Gates of Delirium*, and ELP's "Karn Evil 9: First Impression (Part 2)" is an excerpt of the larger work *Karn Evil 9*.

12. "Presentness" has become a hot issue again in recent years. See Gumbrecht (2004). Two important articles that discuss the issue of "presentness" in music are Fink (1998) and Abbate (2004).

13. Both Fink and Abbate have recently made similar points. Abbate (2004) uses the term "cryptographic sublime" to describe musicologists' obsession with decoding every detail in a score. Fink urges us to "avoid totalizing (framing) critical gesture altogether, whether in the service of autonomous form or cultural code; stop trying to put the entire piece together (musicology) or take it totally apart (popular music studies). Get in, say something that helps convey the immediacy of the musical experience, and *get out*. Stop marching through the music's architecture—and *dance* a little" (1998:167).

14. Some scholars have made similar points about nineteenth-century opera. See, for example, Hibberd (1998).

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