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Landscape as Music: A New Approach to the Study the Spiritual Beauty in Landscape Design

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Key words:

Music, Composition, Visual landscape, Spatial Language,

Abstract:

In architectural theory, the relationship between emotion and design has been discussed by several theorists. This has been done at different periods in both the east and the west, often with comparisons to music. Friedrich Wilhelm Joseph Von Schelling first mentioned the relationship between architecture and music in his book *The Philosophy of Art*. He wrote that architecture is like frozen music. The space sequence of architecture is a parallel to the melodic sequence of music. Both have narrative, flow, and continuity (Scruton 1979). Architectural space is not confined in three dimensions. Architecture and music are not related mathematically because the connecting point is that they are both about space creation (Muecke and Zach 2007).

It is only recently that landscape architects have become interested in exploring the emotional interaction between people and public open space (Smith 2009). Compared with architectural design, landscape design takes place at more scales. But there is a certain scale, for example in small public open spaces, which is similar to the design of architectural space. Even though landscape design is not identical with architectural design, the process of space creation is similar. As discussed above, the aesthetic nature of landscape space-making is to create spaces that have both physical and spiritual beauty (Messervy and Abell 2007). From the users' point of view, 'spiritual beauty' implies that a space should connect with their emotions. Also, like architecture, landscape architectural design has a close relationship with music in that it is a very direct way of expressing the mood of space.

The aim of the paper is to explore an approach to understanding landscape architectural design by using music to interpret the emotional and spiritual meaning of visual landscapes. It starts from a music composition by the author which aims to present a spatial landscape transformation through a musical composition. It demonstrates the relationship between the elements in a landscape architecture composition and the elements in a musical composition (which was the initial inspiration to the author to explore this approach).

The next stage of the paper will use comparable approaches to study the character of western landscape design and music in four selected periods in art history: Renaissance, Baroque, Romanticism and Pop Art. For example, one of the comparable pairs is the water feature design in Villa d' Este and Franz Liszt's composition *Les jeux d'eau a la Villa d'Este* (The Fountains of the Villa d' Este). This involves both the relationship between music and landscape spatial meaning and the emotional-visual connection between visual language and a musical work.

The exploration will help expand landscape theory from a two/three dimensional discipline into a four-dimensional approach to exploration and reflection. The hope is to develop a new approach to understanding the visual language of landscape to benefit education and the profession.

References

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