

Slaughterhouse-Five CD Project: Liner Note Examples

Example One (Andrew)

"The Trapeze Swinger" by Iron & Wine

Similarities between this song and Vonnegut's description of Tralfamadorian literature are disquietingly abundant. This protracted, hauntingly beautiful composition consists of eight disparate stanzas backed by understated instruments which allow the vocals to take center stage for most of the nine-minutes-plus duration of the track. There is no story being told, and no logical progression from one part to the next; each begins with "please, remember me"—consider this the set of stars that separates the alien "telegrams"—and each proceeds in a different direction. Some are anecdotal, some abstract; they describe events past, present, and future, and the concept of time becomes immaterial. They appeal to one's emotions at various levels of sophistication, and each has a rather vaguely-defined but definitely present theme. I can't describe it any better than by using Vonnegut's words: "an image of life that is beautiful and surprising and deep" (112). Consider the stanzas as a whole, like the Tralfamadorians would: you have an intricate, resplendent portrait of the human condition.

And is it just me, or does the woodwind solo at 9:00 bear an uncanny resemblance to Vonnegut's birds' "poo-tee-weet"?

Example Two (Andrea)

"There was an old typewriter in the rumpus room. It was a beast" (33). From this typewriter, Billy writes to comfort many people with his revelation on the "truth about time." As "Sidewalk Flight" by Yann Tiersen begins with the click-clack of an old typewriter, Billy starts his memo. As Billy time travels to more and more places—Tralfamador, Dersden, the local YMCA pool—new melodies are gradually added to the typing, Billy's typing. The bright, chipper xylophone suggests a happy instant, perhaps a sun-drenched afternoon at the Tralfamadore zoo, while the accordion's lament tells of another, cheerless space in time.