

19<sup>th</sup> CENTURY MUSIC CRITICISM AND AESTHETICS

19<sup>th</sup> CENTURY MUSIC CRITICISM AND AESTHETICS:  
MUTUAL INFLUENCES

By

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A Thesis

Submitted to the School of Graduate Studies

in Partial Fulfilment of the Requirements

for the Degree

Master of Arts

McMaster University

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MASTER OF ARTS (2006)

McMaster University

(Music Criticism)

Hamilton, Ontario

TITLE: 19<sup>th</sup> Century Music Criticism and Aesthetics: Mutual Influences

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NUMBER OF PAGES: vi, 84.

## ABSTRACT

During the 19<sup>th</sup> century, due to cultural, economical and social conditions, there were significant changes in the direction and the aesthetic status of music. While a program aesthetically justified became a necessary element for many composers, music became a necessary element in aesthetic theories. Over the decades the ideological support of music as art gained in importance, determining music to be considered the most important artistic manifestation. I argue that the communication between musicians and philosophers made possible mutual influences between their theoretical approaches to music.

In order to investigate the mutual influences between the musicians and philosophers of the 19<sup>th</sup> century, my first two chapters investigate the extant ideas in the areas of music criticism and aesthetics. Thus, I analyze the ideas of Eduard Hanslick, Franz Liszt and Richard Wagner as representative figures of the debate between the promoters of absolute and program music. The evolution of the status of music, from being ranked the lowest amongst the arts and considered simple entertainment, to the most important art, which offers relief from the suffering and pain caused by existence, is examined in the theories of Immanuel Kant, W. J. Schelling, G. W. F. Hegel, Arthur Schopenhauer, Søren Kierkegaard and Friedrich Nietzsche.

The third chapter uncovers the ideological influences between the theories and ideas of several musicians and philosophers. Thus, I show how Hanslick was influenced by Kant, Liszt by Hegel, Wagner by Schopenhauer, and Nietzsche by Wagner. Writings, reviews and letters provide relevant examples. My analysis shows that both philosophers and musicians gradually recognized the crucial role of music for human existence and that they strengthened their ideologies by relying on each other's developing thought on music, in the attempt to achieve the most relevant form of expression through music, as a highly significant human activity.

## ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

First and foremost I want to thank to my thesis supervisor, Dr. James Deaville, whose endless patience and thoughtfulness encouraged me along the entire process of writing this thesis. With his keen insight into the musical and social context and into the thought of the European 19<sup>th</sup> century, he provided me with countless valuable suggestions that guided me in my research. All his efforts are highly appreciated.

My thanks also go to Dr. Mary Cyr, music critic William Littler, and Dr. William Renwick. Their courses, as well as those taught by Dr. Deaville, opened for me new and fascinating perspectives on music, transforming the Music Criticism programme into a fruitful experience.

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*To my father*



## Introduction

The 19<sup>th</sup> century represents an important period in the ideological history of Western art music. Besides the changes in musical structure and content, the 19<sup>th</sup> century brought a change in the way music was to be perceived and appreciated. The results of the change in the ideological status of Western art music, which are still valid today, are due as much to those directly involved in producing/consuming music (composers, performers, audience), as to the music critics' and, surprisingly enough, philosophers' contributions.

My intention in this thesis is to follow the evolution of some ideas about classical music in both music criticism and aesthetics of the period and to show the degree of interdependency of the two. On the one hand, even if philosophers considered music a worthy subject for discussion over the centuries, music was still scarcely debated by philosophers before the 19<sup>th</sup> century. On the other hand, music critics were just starting to understand their social role and promote the social role of music. Neither was the philosopher trying to understand the virtues and details of music, nor the critic interested in finding the role of music in human existence. But, by the end of the century, this situation had changed dramatically. The philosopher became a musician (Nietzsche) and the musician/critic a philosopher (Wagner). While the philosopher showed new interest in details like harmonic relations, the critic did the same for the social role of music. In my view, this ideological leap in aesthetic theories and music criticism of the 19<sup>th</sup> century was mainly possible because of a fruitful cooperation among two categories of "critics": the more theoretically oriented, i.e., the philosophers, and the more practically oriented, i.e., the music critics.

In order to determine and analyze the mutual influences between aesthetic theories of music and music criticism, a brief consideration of their evolution in the 19<sup>th</sup> century is necessary. In music, the beginning of the 19<sup>th</sup> century is marked by the significant work of Ludwig van Beethoven who opened new means of expression for future generations of composers, making the transition from Classicism to Romanticism in music. Interested in developing expressiveness in music, with a strong accent on personal experience, subjectivity, and individuality, "romantic" composers like Hector Berlioz, Frédéric Chopin and Franz Liszt developed new musical genres with increasingly stronger programmatic content. The romantic period was accompanied by the development of nationalism, which brought old legends and folk tales as an important source of inspiration. Richard Wagner was the one composer to use these sources in the most elaborate way in his *Gesamtkunstwerk*, in the second half of the century.

The new elements in the evolution of music as well as in its social and economic context brought significant changes in music criticism. The traditional type of review, informative and educational, as established by critics of the 18<sup>th</sup> century like Johann Mattheson in Germany or Charles Burney in England, remained an important part of the criticism of the century. Published mostly in daily newspapers, the common review had as a goal the shaping of taste in the new rising public of the middle class. At the same time, many specialized publications, such as Robert Schumann's *Neue Zeitschrift für*

*Musik*, developed and started to publish more elaborate items that looked at the musical work also from a social or aesthetic point of view. Not only music critics, but numerous composers, such as Robert Schumann, Hector Berlioz, Franz Liszt and Richard Wagner, began to express their opinions on music in writing. One of the most influential music critics of the century, Eduard Hanslick, who was a promotor of absolute music in the midst of the debate over program music, stated his position in a philosophical manner in his extensive work, *Vom Musikalisch-Schönen*. Richard Wagner also chose to develop his ideas on the “art-work of the future” in large pieces of writing.

Thus, in the first chapter of my thesis, the central European music critic’s perspective on music in the 19<sup>th</sup> century will be presented as a dichotomy between absolute and program music. Hanslick’s work will serve as an example for the supporters of absolute music, while writings of Franz Liszt and Richard Wagner will provide examples in favour of program music. The goal is to determine the music critic’s ideological interest in music and its role, and to follow the evolution of music from being considered a purely aesthetic pleasure to a necessary human activity, with a specific social and existential role.

The second chapter of this thesis will show how the 19<sup>th</sup> century is a period when philosophers not only began to pay more attention to and write about music, but they also started to include music in their philosophical systems and aesthetic theories. Under the influence of Immanuel Kant’s philosophical work, the philosophy of the 19<sup>th</sup> century makes its debut with the works of strong adherents of “Idealism,” like F. W. J. Schelling and G. W. F. Hegel. Inheriting the “philosophical system” as the most appropriate form of understanding the world, from Kant as well, the idealists mostly dealt with the spiritual nature of reality and the significance of human reason in the quest for “Truth.” As opposed to Kant’s theory, the idealists considered that humans can gain access to the Truth through special means, like philosophy, religion or the arts. As the arts were understood as a possible way of approaching Truth, this is the context in which they start to become more significant for philosophical and aesthetic investigation. Disregarding the system format, Arthur Schopenhauer had a different approach to the world and human existence. As later discussed by Kierkegaard and Nietzsche, human existence is evaluated in relation to suffering and pain. This time, the arts, and especially music, become a way of releasing the pain of the existence.

Thus, in order to understand the philosopher’s perspective on music in the 19<sup>th</sup> century, a concise consideration of the ideas on music encountered in the major aesthetic theories of the century is necessary. In the second chapter, the theories of F. W. J. Schelling, G. W. F. Hegel, Arthur Schopenhauer, Søren Kierkegaard, and Friedrich Nietzsche will be discussed and approached chronologically, studying the evolution of the status of music. Immanuel Kant’s unfavorable definition of music will be the starting point for the discussion of the philosopher’s perspective. The analysis of the above-mentioned theories will reveal the status of music and its evolution as a means to an end like *the Absolute*, or *the Idea*, and then as a possibility of *alleviating the pain* of human existence.

After determining the main ideas encompassed in aesthetic theories and music reviews, mutual influences will be scrutinized. The appearance of the program as a

component of music required an ideological support, making musicians pay more attention to the aesthetic theories of the time. At the same time, philosopher's interest in arts increased, considering the sudden philosophical importance that the arts gained in the attempt to uncover the Truth. Aesthetics and music became important areas of study and activity for both philosophers and musicians. My intent is to make a brief analysis of the relevant aspects of the life and works of several philosophers and music critics who represent the core of musical ideological cooperation in the 19<sup>th</sup> century.

Consequently, in order to reveal the ideas exchanged between and shared by both theorists and critics, Chapter III of the thesis will investigate examples from representative musical, philosophical studies, and other relevant writings. I will also analyze some of the 19<sup>th</sup> century music reviews that employ specific aesthetic ideas as well-known and accepted facts, emphasizing the social, economic, and educational reasons that contribute to mutual influences and interests. The focus will be on a few notable philosopher-music critic pairings who, by their writings and influence, created some peak moments in the evolution of the status of music in the 19<sup>th</sup> century. Thus, Hanslick used some of Kant's ideas and elaborated a formalist theory that is still discussed today; Liszt used Hegel's theory in order to argue in favour of programmatic music; Wagner found the perfect ideological support of his ideas in Schopenhauer's aesthetic theory; and Nietzsche's music aesthetics found a material support in Wagner's operatic work.

As most significant writings on music in the 19<sup>th</sup> century discuss chiefly Western art music (as opposed to popular or folk music), my endeavour will exclusively concern "classical" music. The musicians and philosophers discussed in this thesis are not chosen to represent thought about music from a given nation, language or geographic area. The most influential European theories, which have arisen mostly in German-speaking countries, represent the main criterion used in my selection of authors. However, this thesis does not intend to discuss exhaustively all influential theories, music critics and philosophers of the century, but only to point out some of those who contributed to the change in the status of music.

CHAPTER I  
THE MUSIC CRITIC'S PERSPECTIVE ON MUSIC  
IN THE 19<sup>TH</sup> CENTURY

Cultural and Social Musical Context in the 19<sup>th</sup> Century

There are several elements that should be considered when speaking about the musical life of the 19<sup>th</sup> century: professional activities, musical centres, consumers and writings on music.<sup>1</sup> The development and diversity of these elements are closely related to the economic and social changes of the time. As a consequence of the French revolution in 1789 and Napoleon coming into power, most of Europe was under French influence, politically and socially. In a period of political stability and economical growth, especially in central Europe, social hierarchies changed and the population moved towards the big cities.<sup>2</sup> In this context, musical life developed extensively in the first half of the century, especially in Paris, London, and Vienna. The demographic growth, along with a decrease of the cost of food, created appropriate conditions for a new public to emerge.<sup>3</sup> As a result of a better standard of living, the middle class, comprising merchants, bankers, civil servants, but also “shopkeepers, clerks and lower-professionals,” manifested a significantly increased interest in entertainment and arts.<sup>4</sup> The frequency of different types of performances increased, making music an affordable form of cultural entertainment.

Musicians

During the 19th century being a musician became a financially more secure profession. Starting with the end of the 18<sup>th</sup> century, the rise of the middle class and its interest in art opened new opportunities for independent musicians. Thus, many performers, conductors, and composers were able to make a living exclusively from their musical activities, thereby becoming more independent than their predecessors. After 1830, performers start to play works by themselves and by other recognized composers, making a career out of pure interpretation.<sup>5</sup> As public concerts were less numerous, performing in private settings constituted the primary activity of most

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<sup>1</sup> John Rink, “The Profession of Music,” *The Cambridge History of Nineteenth-Century Music*, Jim Samson, ed. (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2002), 55.

<sup>2</sup> *Ibid.*, 57.

<sup>3</sup> *Ibid.*, 58.

<sup>4</sup> *Ibid.*, 57.

<sup>5</sup> *Ibid.*, 65.

performers.<sup>6</sup> The goal of ambitious musicians was to perform before aristocracy, where, besides being able to choose their repertoire, they could also get the best outcome in terms of finances, as Liszt later did. Still, especially in the first decades of the century, many musicians combined performance or conducting with teaching. Writing about music, considered and promoted by Schumann and Wagner as an essential aspect of understanding music,<sup>7</sup> was to become another valuable possibility of musical activity over the decades of the 19<sup>th</sup> century.

In the new social and economic context, the composer suddenly had to strive for gaining an audience. As happened with Mozart or Beethoven, the best way to start a career as a successful composer was to first become a successful soloist. This was the case of Weber, for example, and of Chopin and Liszt. The lack of public exposure could have unfavorable financial consequences. Franz Schubert and Hector Berlioz, for example, dealt throughout their entire life with the poor financial rewards of their work, despite the acclaimed quality.<sup>8</sup> In this context, teaching and private lessons constituted the most reliable source of income. Charles Hallé, good friend with Chopin, Liszt and Berlioz, wrote after the 1848 revolution in France:

In Paris by far the greatest part a musician's income was invariably derived from teaching, and so it was with Chopin, Heller, many others and myself; but from the day after the Revolution, the pupils disappeared, and at the end of the week I could only boast of one...<sup>9</sup>

The most influential musicians of the 19<sup>th</sup> century – composers like Wagner, Schumann, Liszt – tried to make an aesthetic statement through their musical work, making a case for the rise of program music. According to Henry Raynor, the connection between the written word – poetry, literature – and music might have been a consequence of the fact that the composers “subconsciously” realized that, in this new form, music could reach more listeners than before.<sup>10</sup> Moreover, nationalistic and political aspects in Wagner's operatic work could also be connected with the desire of reaching a wider audience.

As orchestra positions were hard to obtain, instrumentalists also relied on teaching. Berlioz pointed out: “A first violin at the Opera was lucky if he earned 900 francs a year; he lived by giving lessons. It is hardly to be supposed that he could have saved on a very brilliant scale.”<sup>11</sup> However, it was different for successful soloists. Judging by their fame and income from musical activities, the virtuoso performer or singer could be considered the most successful type of musician of the 19<sup>th</sup> century.

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<sup>6</sup> William Weber, *Music and the Middle Class: the Social Structure of Concert Life in London, Paris and Vienna 1830-1848* (Burlington: Ashgate, 2004), 6.

<sup>7</sup> Celia Applegate & Pamela Potter (ed.), *Music and German National Identity* (Chicago: The University of Chicago Press, 2002), 14.

<sup>8</sup> Henry Raynor, *Music and Society Since 1815* (London: Barrie & Jenkins, 1976), 20 and 25.

<sup>9</sup> *Ibid.*, 28.

<sup>10</sup> *Ibid.*, 22.

<sup>11</sup> *Ibid.*, 28.

Pianists, violinists and singers virtuosi constituted one of the main attractions in the musical life of the 19<sup>th</sup> century. With the popularity of Italian opera, singers like Angelica Catani or Giovanna Battista Rubini had huge incomes in comparison to any other musician.<sup>12</sup> Even though piano virtuosi, such as Liszt, Thalberg or Chopin, had a very strong impact on the audience, stirring the musical scene with their open disputes and display of *stile brillante*, the reward for their performances was rather low. It was only when Paganini started to ask high fees, similar to those for famous singers, that instrumentalists started to be paid accordingly.<sup>13</sup>

### Concert life

During the period between 1813 and 1848 there was a notable increase in the number and significance of musical performances. Moreover, between 1848 and 1870, the concert world took its modern form.<sup>14</sup> Even so, public concerts evolved much more slowly than home activities and musical commerce.<sup>15</sup> Like at the beginning of the century, the nobility was still the main sponsor of public concerts, even though the number of public concerts increased insignificantly in the first decade of the century, especially in Vienna. It was only in the second decade of the century, when the middle class took more control over the public musical activities that the number of concerts increased dramatically.<sup>16</sup> Even so, there was still a major quantitative difference between private and public music concerts. For example, in the season 1845-1846, public concerts constituted only 8% of the musical activities in Paris, 13% in Vienna, and 20% in London.<sup>17</sup>

There were three main types of concerts during the first half of the century that were the object of the music critic's work: institutional concerts, benefit concerts and concerts given by amateur musical organizations.<sup>18</sup> Institutional concerts were usually presented by a permanent organization of professional music, mainly orchestral ensembles. As mentioned before, these public concerts were primarily sponsored by the upper class, thus having a select repertoire and audience. In order to attend such a performance the listener had to buy a subscription for the whole season and also to obtain approval from a committee of musicians.<sup>19</sup> Having a subscription represented such an important social and cultural recognition that after 1850, they were passed to the next generation in wills.<sup>20</sup> Since in these concerts the musical works were valued more than

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<sup>12</sup> Rink, 69.

<sup>13</sup> Ibid., 68.

<sup>14</sup> Weber, 3.

<sup>15</sup> Ibid., 6.

<sup>16</sup> Ibid.

<sup>17</sup> Ibid., 25.

<sup>18</sup> Rink, 59.

<sup>19</sup> Weber, 22.

<sup>20</sup> Ibid., 82.

the actual performance of them, there were not too many virtuoso performers involved and self-display of performers was disapproved.<sup>21</sup>

The benefit concert was the most common and was usually sponsored by an individual musician. By mid-century this type of concert constituted between 45 % and 66% of all concerts in London, Paris and Vienna.<sup>22</sup> Even if this was not an institutionalized type of concert, the performers involved could have very good performance qualities, virtuoso performers being one of the big attractions. Performers were encouraged to display personal interpretative qualities and the audience was expected to respond. A good example of impact on and response of the audience and self-display of the performer is the activity of Liszt, who participated in many benefit concerts. As opposed to the institutional concerts, this type of musical activity, identified by William Weber as “high-class popular music,” was a good starting point for the acceptance of women as performers.<sup>23</sup>

The amateur performances were enjoyed by the lower classes, being intended for family and friends.<sup>24</sup> They were organized by the amateur orchestral and choral societies, which were extant in all major cities. Because they had a continuously growing audience comprising the middle-class amateurs of music, and they had fairly low prices, amateur performances ranked second in number after benefit concerts.

Beside the aforementioned types of concerts, one could also attend in the 1800's music festivals, like the one inaugurated in 1812 in Vienna, for instance, celebrating Handel's and Haydn oratorios, as well as salons and musical parties, promenades and opera.<sup>25</sup> Operatic productions constitute an important type of musical performance, as they became an element of national identity especially in France and Italy in the first half of the century, and also in Germany in the second half.<sup>26</sup> Major musical publications, like the *Allgemeine Musicalische Zeitung*, *Revue et Gazette Musicale de Paris*, and *Gazzetta Musicale di Milano*, dedicated extensive space for articles and reviews with regard to opera.<sup>27</sup> Moreover, most of the critics and philosophers to be discussed in this thesis had a relationship to opera. For example, Hanslick not only became interested in music while attending numerous opera performances during his childhood, but he also wrote numerous reviews of opera and based his ideological conflict with Wagner over German opera at the time. While Wagner found the perfect cultural and social expression in his *Gesamtkuntwerk*, Kierkegaard attributed to Mozart's opera the highest rank among all arts. Also, operatic arias constituted a rich source of materials for benefit concerts and other “popular” musical events.

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<sup>21</sup> Ibid., 24.

<sup>22</sup> Ibid., 21.

<sup>23</sup> Whenever the term “popular” occurs in this chapter, I mean that in Weber's definition unless otherwise specified.

<sup>24</sup> Weber, 22.

<sup>25</sup> Rink, 63.

<sup>26</sup> Roger Parker, “The opera industry,” *The Cambridge History of Nineteenth-Century Music*. Jim Samson, ed. (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2002), 87-88.

<sup>27</sup> Ibid., 89.

### Audience

In the 19<sup>th</sup> century, music became to be considered a very important part of humanistic education. As David Gramit indicates, the most appropriate concert music was considered “that which engaged the highest human faculties, in order to further develop them.”<sup>28</sup> Socializing skills could be developed by engaging children in musical activities. For the rising middle-class, learning and playing piano was a social obligation, especially for the young girls, being a part of their basic cultural education.<sup>29</sup> These children exposed to music early were to become the core of the audience. Musical education became more affordable and considered necessary for appropriate social recognition, and musical materials – scores, reviews and published articles intended to shape the taste of the new public became accessible. However, as the social status of the music amateur still mattered significantly, education and good taste were not the only element he needed in order to have access to all types of musical performance.

One of the most important characteristics of the public in the major musical cities in the 19<sup>th</sup> century was the difference between the social classes of the consumers. They attended different performances, in William Weber’s terms: “high-status classical music”, represented by institutional concerts, “high-status popular music” represented by the benefit concerts, and “low status concerts” represented by amateur performances. While at the benefit concerts the public was constituted by people who had some type of relation with the sponsor – pupils or salon audience –,<sup>30</sup> for the institutional concerts, the listeners, as mentioned before, were carefully selected. They also had different tastes, and a strong and usually unfavorable opinion about the opposing category. Besides the self-excluding categories of public, which attended either classical or popular music performances, there were also some eclectic attendants, who “swoon in the morning with Beethoven and in the evening with Rossini,” as Emile Deschamps wrote.<sup>31</sup>

### Musical Literature

Music criticism also had its benefits during this period of flourishing musical life. At the beginning of the century, many of the concerts were previewed or reviewed in daily newspapers, wherever musical performances took place. Even though they included sometime biased or non-professional reviews, professional publications like *The Times* (London), *Revue et Gazette Musicale* (Paris) and *Signale für die Musicalische Welt* (Leipzig) offered to the wide public many educational columns, featuring not only local concert reviews, but also items on international performances, composers and musical works.<sup>32</sup> Starting with the first half of the 19<sup>th</sup> century, the considerable development of

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<sup>28</sup> David Gramit, *The Aspirations, Interests, and Limits of German Musical Culture, 1770-1848* (Berkeley and Los Angeles: University of California Press, 2002), 134.

<sup>29</sup> Weber, 30.

<sup>30</sup> Ibid., 18.

<sup>31</sup> Ibid., 22.

<sup>32</sup> Ibid., 80.



journalism offered a solid ground for musical publications to be able to permanently hire professional music critics. Thus, in the large cultural centers, specialized musical publications appeared. The highest standards in music journalism in German-speaking Europe were established by the *Allgemeine Musikalische Zeitung* (founded 1798) and *Neue Zeitschrift für Musik* (founded 1834), both published in Leipzig. Also influential were London's *Quarterly Musical Magazine and Review* and Paris' *Journal des Débats* and *Revue Musicale*.

The writing on music took different forms in different countries and different decades of the century. For example, Eduard Hanslick wrote concert reviews for the daily press in Vienna – *Wiener Zeitung*, *Die Presse* and *Die Neue Freie Presse* for almost fifty years, until he died in 1895. While in his first period of practical literary activity Liszt wrote his travel impressions, *Lettres d'un bachelier ès musique, 1835-1841* for the French press, i.e. the *Gazette musicale* and *L'Artiste*, in his Weimer period (1849-1859), he published extensive reviews in German for *Neue Zeitschrift für Musik* in Leipzig.<sup>33</sup> According to Bojan Bujic, Hector Berlioz also contributed between 1832 and 1863 to sixteen Parisian periodicals. Besides writing concert reviews, Berlioz wrote essays and criticism.<sup>34</sup> Wagner preferred to expose his ideas in large writings like *Art and Revolution*, (1949), *The Art-Work of the Future* (1949), and *Opera and Drama* (1851).

Eduard Hanslick, Franz Liszt and Hector Berlioz, Richard Wagner, Robert Schumann, and Francois-Joseph Fétis are only a few of the musical personalities signing the reviews and musical writings. While the concert review was to become one of the most valued forms of music writing, educational articles and mixed *feuilletons* contributed to the general shaping of musical taste and values. Only in the second half of the century did theories and philosophical arguments become an important element in the process of evaluation of music as a social component.

### **The Music Criticism of the Time**

Favoured by economic and social stability, as well as by the increasing importance of music as a social and cultural event, the music criticism of the 19<sup>th</sup> century continuously developed and influenced the taste of the public as well as the aesthetic status of music over the decades. Among the music critics mentioned in the introduction of this thesis, Eduard Hanslick, Franz Liszt and Richard Wagner did more for the musical discourse of the century than writing reviews: they brought to light the importance of music as a social and aesthetic cultural activity for their contemporaries. Besides being composers (with the exception of Hanslick who was actually a law graduate), these musicians wrote articles and even books about the place that music should occupy in society. The technical evolution, the performance, the composition and the roles of music

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<sup>33</sup> Serge Gut, *Franz Liszt* (Edition de Fallois/L'Age d'Homme, 1989), 584-585 (Catalogue complet des oeuvres littéraires).

<sup>34</sup> Bojan Bujic, ed. *Music in European Thought. 1851-1912* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1988), 227.

and of the artist for society are topics equally discussed in these writings. In order to evaluate how these musicians influenced and were influenced by aesthetic theories, let us examine at their written work and ideas on music.

### Eduard Hanslick

Eduard Hanslick (1825-1904) was an influential figure in music criticism, as he not only wrote newspaper criticism for musical events, but also opened the theoretical discussion about the aesthetics of music. He was one of the main figures in the dispute between absolute and program music. His commitment to absolute music was a consistent one. In a career that covered a number of decades of reviewed concerts, he constantly regarded absolute music as being the real value in the history of music. He was the music critic who went further than his predecessors, by writing not only reviews, but also a book, *Vom Musikalisch-Schönen* (1854), where he exposed his theory about music. In his view, such an action had to take place in order to establish criteria for developing an approach to the music of the time.<sup>35</sup> The need for criteria in aesthetic appreciation was also recognized by his contemporaries. For example, in his 1854 article “Die spekulative Aesthetik und die Kritik,” Robert Zimmermann wrote: “The artist follows his subjective inclination, the critic his private whim. Collaborations towards a common goal, namely, established principles of criticism and an aesthetical understanding of art, are almost as scarce as genuine artists.”<sup>36</sup>

However, because Hanslick had such strong opinions regarding absolute music, his work encountered strong reactions from some of his contemporaries, like Liszt and Wagner. Moreover, some of Hanslick’s enemies accused him of promoting the idea that a musical composition is just an unappealing tonal structure and that there is no intellectual or emotional content embodied in tones.<sup>37</sup> This dispute and its influences on the way that music was perceived at the end of the century comprise the subject of the following discussion.

Hanslick’s theory of art is regarded by many to be merely a formalist theory. According to the formalist view, the only aspect of music relevant to its appreciation is its form.<sup>38</sup> In other words, music is pure “sound structure.” Absolute music, as understood today, does not possess semantic or representational content. It is not of or about anything; it represents no objects and tells no stories.<sup>39</sup> Hanslick argues his position by using two theses: the negative thesis, which states that the primary purpose of music as an art is not to generate or to represent emotions, and the positive thesis, which states that

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<sup>35</sup> Eduard Hanslick, *On the Musically Beautiful. A Contribution Towards the Revision of the Aesthetics of Music*, translated by Geoffrey Payzant (Indianapolis: Hackett Publishing Company, 1986), xii.

<sup>36</sup> Geoffrey Paysant, “Eduard Hanslick and Robert Zimmermann: A Biographical Sketch” (<http://www.rodoni.ch/busoni/cronologia/note/hanslick.pdf>), 19.

<sup>37</sup> As described by Payzant: “but they [the enemies] did this without having read his book, or so it seems,” Payzant, 23.

<sup>38</sup> In this thesis, unless otherwise specified, “music” means instrumental/absolute music.

<sup>39</sup> Peter Kivy, *Introduction to a Philosophy of Music* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 2002), 67.

the beauty of music resides in the musical materials themselves, and especially their form. The negative thesis, that the primary purpose of music as an art is not to express emotions,<sup>40</sup> encompasses the most important elements in the argumentative foundation for absolute music in the dispute of the 19<sup>th</sup> century. It was Hanslick's endeavour to make "pure art" accepted in its aesthetic sense.<sup>41</sup>

Even if Hanslick is considered to be the first author to treat music in a professional manner from an aesthetic point of view, similar ideas are to be found in previous philosophical writings. For example, in his *Critique of Judgement*, Kant considers instrumental music as being a good example for the concept of "free beauty," which is beauty without a special purpose. Free beauty (*pulchritudo vaga*) is opposed to adherent beauty (*pulchritudo adherens*), which is purposeful and can be found in architecture or in human beauty, for example.<sup>42</sup> While we can make an aesthetic judgment about a musical piece in a pure way, without any external influences, we need to evaluate an architectural beauty always thinking of its function.<sup>43</sup> The influence of Kant's ideas on Hanslick's theory will be discussed in more detail later in this thesis.

Hanslick adopts this purist approach to music and, after studying various aesthetic theories, points out that most of them deal with the musical piece merely by taking into consideration the feelings it expresses. *Vom Musikalisch-Schönen* is the result of his attempt to establish the aesthetic value of music as being an intrinsic one, and not one based on external emotional effects. In Hanslick's opinion, to start the examination of music as work of art from the feelings generated by it is a "methodological error" that leads to an invalid aesthetic theory. Considering music in relation to feelings prevents the aesthetician from investigating the beautiful in music. Only "by breaking away from a method which takes subjective feeling as its starting point" can one make sure that the analysis is based on solid grounds.<sup>44</sup>

Hanslick says in reference to music, "it is claimed that to arouse the delicate feelings is the defining purpose of music," and "the feelings are designated as the content of music, that which musical art presents in its works."<sup>45</sup> These are the two ideas that Hanslick tries to disprove in his theory. In his view, music can be beautiful regardless of the feelings aroused or perceived when in contact with the musical piece. The fact that music can arouse our feelings is not a sufficient reason to consider that the aesthetic significance of music resides in this connection. It is true that we can *describe* the experience of music and musical qualities in metaphorical emotional terms, but "the

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<sup>40</sup> In discussing Hanslick's theory on music, I will use the term "express" in a general understanding, as a synonym for "generate" or "represent." Only in the discussion of contemporary theories will a more specific usage of the same term occur.

<sup>41</sup> Carl Dalhaus, *The Idea of Absolute Music* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1989), 16.

<sup>42</sup> Kai Hammermeister, *The German Aesthetic Tradition* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2002), 26.

<sup>43</sup> Ibid.

<sup>44</sup> Hanslick, 1.

<sup>45</sup> Ibid., 3.

immediate experience of music itself is not an emotion, and the thoughts most immediately involved in making or composing music are not emotions.”<sup>46</sup>

According to Peter Kivy, Hanslick uses three main arguments in order to prove his theory: the argument about disagreement, the argument about the re-use of music by composers to set texts of disparate emotions or tone and the cognitive analysis of emotion.<sup>47</sup> All three arguments present the relation between music and emotion from the perspective of the listener’s emotional interpretation of the musical piece. In exposing his arguments, Hanslick is concerned solely with the idea that music does not express specific emotions, and therefore the emotions that *can* be felt by the listener vary. It is not Hanslick’s intention to prove that music cannot be heard in relation to emotions, but that music itself does not contain emotions and, as a result, music cannot represent or express specific emotions.

The *argument from disagreement* states that the same piece of music has different emotional interpretations for different listeners. Because musical content is not an emotional one, different listeners have different emotional reactions when listening to the same piece of music. Hanslick considers that there is a possibility that all listeners will agree with regard to the beauty of the piece, but not with regard to its content:

[...] he may play the most popular themes from overtures by Auber, Donizetti, Flotow. Who will come forward and venture to declare that some specific feeling is the content of one of these themes? One person will say “love.” Possibly another thinks “yearning.” Perhaps a third feels “piety.” Nobody can refute any of them. And so it goes. Can we call it the representation of a specific feeling when nobody knows what feeling was actually represented? Concerning the beauty of the pieces of music, probably everyone will agree. Yet concerning the content of music, everyone differs.<sup>48</sup>

The second argument used by Hanslick states that because music does not express emotion, *the same musical piece can be re-used* as a support for lyrics with different emotional contents. Because music does not contain emotions, it cannot express emotions, and thus, by adding different lyrics, it can be used in totally different emotional contexts. In Hanslick’s opinion, composers are actually re-using the same musical methods or even the exact same pieces for different emotional purposes, as his Handel example shows:

Our greatest masters of sacred music, Handel in particular, offer abundant examples in support of what we are saying here. He proceeded in this with great nonchalance. [...] Many of the most famous pieces in Messiah, including some of

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<sup>46</sup> Nick Zangwill, “Against Emotion: Hanslick was right about music,” *British Journal of Aesthetics*, Vol. 44, No. 1, January 2004, 42.

<sup>47</sup> Peter Kivy, “What was Hanslick Denying?” *The Journal of Musicology*. Vol. 8, No.1, Winter, 1990, 7-9.

<sup>48</sup> Hanslick, 14.

the ones most admired for their godly sentiments, are for the most part transcribed from the secular and mainly erotic duets which Handel composed in 1711-12...<sup>49</sup>

In Hanslick's opinion, composers act this way because the emotion-free nature of music gives them the opportunity to do so. To re-use a musical piece for a different emotional response in the listener's mind seems like an easy task, as "more specific and expressive passages of vocal music will, when separated from their texts, at best only allow us to guess which feelings they express. They are like silhouettes whose originals we cannot recognize without someone giving us a hint as to their identity."<sup>50</sup>

The last argument is the most interesting one, as it takes into consideration psychological aspects of human perception. This *cognitive analysis* made by Hanslick suggests that the emotional interpretation of a musical piece is influenced by the listener's psychological state of mind. As a result, any musical piece, regardless of its form, can be interpreted as having an emotional content, which is actually the reflection of the listener's state of mind:

For one who has to hear or make music while in a distressingly agitated mood, music throbs like vinegar in an open wound. The shape and character of what we hear then lose their significance entirely; be it an adagio gloomy as night or a lilting waltz, we cannot disentangle ourselves from its sounds. No longer are we aware of the piece, but only of the sounds themselves...<sup>51</sup>

But Hanslick's position on absolute music is not only to be discovered in his aesthetic endeavor. Many of his reviews, especially those of Wagner's music, reinforce the same beliefs, as might be expected. However, it should be stated that the conflict between Hanslick and Wagner had little influence on Hanslick's beliefs, especially as Hanslick actually liked Wagner's first operatic compositions. It was the evolution of music composition and programmatic tendencies that concerned Hanslick. As Peter Gay mentions, "the structure of Hanslick's argument was complete in 1854, when Wagner was a relatively unknown if promising composer of operas and a relatively uninfluential if provocative writer of manifestos."<sup>52</sup>

In his review of Liszt's Symphonic Poems, Hanslick states that it is unfair to deny the composer the poetical stimulation offered by external factors, music itself cannot express a definite object. Music cannot reflect the essential characteristics of an object. Only the title or the words associated with that piece can give a clue about these characteristics.<sup>53</sup> Moreover "music has to be based on its own laws and remain

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<sup>49</sup> *Ibid.*, 19.

<sup>50</sup> *Ibid.*, 18.

<sup>51</sup> *Ibid.*, 50.

<sup>52</sup> Geoffrey Payzant, "Hanslick, Sams, Gay, and "Tonend Bewegte Formen"," *The Journal of Aesthetics and Art Criticism*. Vol. 40, No. 1 (Autumn, 1981), 41.

<sup>53</sup> Eduard Hanslick, *Music Criticism 1846-99. Eduard Hanslick*. Henry Pleasants, ed. (Baltimore: Penguin Books, 1963), 54.

specifically musical, thus making, even without program, a clear, independent impression.”<sup>54</sup>

When writing about the *Symphonic Poems*, Hanslick tried to prove that the main mistake Liszt made is that he relies too much on external ideas:

He has chosen to approach music from an angle where, inspired by external idea, it occupies the comparative intellect and stimulates poetic or picturesque fantasy; he imposes an abusive mission on the subjects of his symphonies: either to fill the gap left by the absence of musical content or to justify the atrociousness of such content.<sup>55</sup>

Also, as stated before, Wagner’s music represented a continuous motivation for Hanslick to argue his position. He can see certain qualities in this music, but the essential characteristics that music should always comprise are missing. For example, Wagner’s *Die Meistersinger* is a remarkable, consistent, earnest, rich creation, but it is “an awkward, contrived, continuously restless music, with a noisy and complex instrumentation,” which “becomes monotonous through the continual use of dissonant chords when the ear expects a concluding triad.”<sup>56</sup> This review is relevant to the effect that Hanslick could not easily accept the use of different and new musical material and, moreover, using such different technique of composition for a different purpose than the pure beauty of music, meaning expressing ideas.

### Franz Liszt

Known mostly as composer and virtuoso performer, Franz Liszt (1881-1886) made a notable contribution in the evolution of program music. That his ideological contribution in music tends to be overlooked, is a situation justified given the power and impact that Liszt had on his audience: “In their unbelievable unprecedented technical development, [his accomplishments] are of such ideal, abstract nature, that you forget the creator of the same in light of the beautiful world of the spirit into which he had transported us.”<sup>57</sup>

His social presence as an active musician was so strong that his intellectual interests were easily disregarded not only by his audience, but also by most of the authors who wrote about Liszt. For example, Ernest Newman created an image of an unthinking Liszt, who was not intelligent enough to “penetrate understandingly, or even

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<sup>54</sup> Ibid., 55.

<sup>55</sup> Ibid., 54.

<sup>56</sup> Ibid., 111-112.

<sup>57</sup> James Deaville, “The Politics of Liszt’s Virtuosity,” *Analecta Lisztiana III: Liszt and the Birth of Modern Europe. Music as a Mirror of Religious, Political, Cultural, and Aesthetic Transformations*, Michael Saffle and Rossana Dalmonte, ed. (Hillsdale, New York: Pendragon Press, 2003), 129.

sympathetically, into the speculative depths of Wagner's mind."<sup>58</sup> However, Liszt's sporadic writings with philosophical tendency prove him to be a very important link in the evolution of musical thinking as it developed in the musical community (as distinct from philosophical circles). Liszt's philosophical knowledge seems to have been founded on serious readings:

For the past fortnight my mind and fingers have been working away like two lost spirits. The Bible, Homer, Plato, Locke, Byron, Hugo, Lamartine, Chateaubriand, Beethoven, Bach, Hummel, Mozart, Weber are all around me. I study them, meditate on them, devour them with fury.<sup>59</sup>

In this manner, Liszt acquired a broad perspective on culture and arts in general, a fact that was to be reflected in his views on music and its role. He understood music from the perspective of culture, namely as an artistic expression with a definite social role, and not as pure entertainment or aesthetic pleasure.

Being primarily a musician, it was not one of Liszt's goals to produce a comprehensive treatise. Therefore, his ideas on music do not constitute a so-called aesthetic theory, as was the case with Eduard Hanslick. After 1848, Liszt exposed his own ideas on music mostly to justify and promote his own musical work and the new style in which he composed, or to do the same for other composers. As a result, his opinions on music as art, program music, artists, etc., are to be found in several different writings. As none of his ideas were presented by Liszt as aesthetic endeavors, he was not considered an aesthete even in his own time by his most important supporters.<sup>60</sup> His essays on Schumann, Berlioz and Wagner's *Tannhauser* and *Lohengrin*,<sup>61</sup> as well as some of his early articles, can be said to encompass the written core of his thinking.

In this context, before analyzing the arguments provided by Liszt in favour of program music, we should mention that for Liszt the new way of composing music is not only a technical matter or a new avant-garde trend. In his view, the whole status of music should be changed along with the concrete form of musical pieces. "The musicians have never largely influenced, not even politically, the fate of this country," wrote Liszt in his 1835 article "De la situation des artistes et de leur condition dans la société."<sup>62</sup> It was time for music to accomplish its important social role. For that, not only music needed to become a means of expression by adopting a program, but there was also the need for the reform of concerts, philharmonic societies, orchestras and choirs. Liszt also considered that music critics should be examined and conferred diplomas in order to write reviews

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<sup>58</sup> Ben Arnold, "Liszt as Reader, Intellectual, and Musician," *Analecta Lisztiana I: Liszt and His World* Michael Saffle, ed. (Stuyvesant, New York: Pendragon Press, 1998), 37.

<sup>59</sup> *Ibid.*, 39.

<sup>60</sup> James Deaville, "The Controversy Surrounding Liszt's Conception of Programme Music," *Nineteenth-Century Music. Selected Proceedings of the Tenth International Conference*, Jim Samson & Bennett Zon ed. (Burlington: Ashgate, 2002), 111.

<sup>61</sup> John Williamson, "Progress, Modernity and the Concept of an Avant-Garde" *The Cambridge History of Nineteenth-Century Music*, Jim Samson, ed. (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2002), 299.

<sup>62</sup> Pierre-Antoine Huré & Claude Knepper, *Liszt en son temps* (Paris: Hachette, 1987), 129.

and that a chair of literature and philosophy of music should be established.<sup>63</sup> Liszt's interest in the social role of music and how this role could be performed show a more philosophical way of approaching music, and "an aesthetics of composition."<sup>64</sup> As his own works reveal, the composer should always be concerned with the intellectual and social impact of his work on the public. Influenced by the idealism of the age, Liszt considered that only art can offer the necessary equilibrium between reality and ideality. He wrote in the article from 1835: "The inner and the poetic sense of things, that ideality which exists in everything, seems to manifest itself pre-eminently in those artistic creations that arouse feelings and ideas."<sup>65</sup>

According to Humphrey Searle, "Liszt, in this new form [the symphonic poems], was trying to represent more explicit problems which had been set out by writers or painters."<sup>66</sup> For Liszt, music should cease to be just a form of entertainment or a source of intellectual pleasure. Music has a much more important role to accomplish:

Only in music does feeling, actually and radiantly present, lift the ban which oppresses our spirit with the sufferings of an evil earthly power and liberate us [...]. Only in music does feeling, in manifesting itself, dispense with the help of reason and its means of expression, so inadequate in comparison with its intuition, so incomplete in comparison with its strength, its delicacy, its brilliance.<sup>67</sup>

This is the message that Liszt intended to express in both his writings and his musical works. As Searle points out, the musical patterns encountered in Liszt's music reveal patterns of human thought, "patterns ultimately descriptive of the dilemmas of human life and consciousness."<sup>68</sup>

Liszt considers program music as being nothing less than a new branch of music.<sup>69</sup> As "music embodies *feeling* without forcing it," the program is only a useful element in achieving expression which is the newly defined goal for music: "the program asks only acknowledgment for the possibility of precise definition of the psychological moment which prompts the composer to create his work and of the thought to which he gives outward form."<sup>70</sup>

The process of evolution that music goes through has its specific characteristics. Liszt strongly believed that program music represents a natural chapter in the evolution of classical music: "the poetic solution of instrumental music contained in the program seems to us rather one of the various steps forward which the art has still to take, a

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<sup>63</sup> Williamson, 298.

<sup>64</sup> Ibid., 297.

<sup>65</sup> Ibid., 296.

<sup>66</sup> Keith T. Johns, *The Symphonic Poems of Franz Liszt* (Stuyvesant: Pendragon Press, 1997), 6.

<sup>67</sup> Franz Liszt, "From Berlioz and His 'Harold' Symphony," *Source Readings in Music History*, Oliver Strunk, ed. (New York: Norton, 1952), 850.

<sup>68</sup> Johns, 6.

<sup>69</sup> Liszt, 851.

<sup>70</sup> Ibid., 863.



necessary result of the development of our time, than a symptom of its exhaustion and decadence.”<sup>71</sup>

It is not unusual that certain old patterns are developed or even lost in the process. The fact that music takes new forms of expression by association with the word is not a step backwards, as Hanslick considers. It does not deny the initial values of music: “an element, through contact with another acquires new properties in losing old ones; exercising another influence in an altered environment.”<sup>72</sup> The role of the composer is to develop the old manners of composition: “the genius enriches the art with unused materials as well as with original manipulations of traditional ones.”<sup>73</sup> The liberating role of the “music of the future” can be achieved only if the composer realizes how expressive music can be in terms of ideas, images and feelings, and he or she then facilitates this expression by using a program.<sup>74</sup>

In order to promote program music, Liszt used philosophical arguments. Despite his antipathy towards reading the writings of Hegel,<sup>75</sup> Liszt’s arguments are founded mainly on Hegelian ideas. As I will show later in this thesis, Hegel’s opinions about poetry seem to be very helpful in praising the characteristics of music accompanied by words, whether poetry or program. There is an interesting aspect in Liszt’s approach to music in relation to the Hegelian theory about music: Liszt completely disregards Hegel’s ideas about the end of music. Not only does Liszt not agree with the fact that music will soon die, but he also argues that music has finally found the perfect means to express emotions and feelings even better than before, and that it has a great future:

The more instrumental music progresses, develops, and frees itself from its early limitations, the more it will tend to bear the stamp of that ideality which marks the perfection of the plastic arts, the more it will cease to be a simple combination of tones and become a poetic language.<sup>76</sup>

Liszt’s belief in the future of music proves that even if he were influenced in his view on music by the philosophy of his time, he had some strong personal goals and opinions about music and he was a distinctive thinker. His own philosophical endeavors are revealed in statements like: “feeling itself lives and breathes in music without representational shell, without the meditation of action or of thought” or “[music] draws us with it to regions into which it alone can penetrate, where, in the ringing ether, the heart expands and, in anticipation, shares in an immaterial, incorporeal, spiritual life.”<sup>77</sup>

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<sup>71</sup> Liszt, 859.

<sup>72</sup> Ibid., 853.

<sup>73</sup> Ibid., 858.

<sup>74</sup> Williamson, 299.

<sup>75</sup> Ibid., 297.

<sup>76</sup> Franz Liszt, *An Artist’s Journey. Lettres d’un bachelier ès musique 1835-1841* (Chicago & London: The University of Chicago Press, 1989), 202.

<sup>77</sup> Liszt, “From Berlioz and His ‘Harold’ Symphony,” 849-850.

## Richard Wagner

Richard Wagner was one of the few composers who extensively published his ideas, not only on music but also on other philosophical and social issues. During his career as a musician, Wagner wrote a number of articles and reviews, but his ideological contribution can be found mostly in his prose work, written during a period of a few years at the middle of the century, when Wagner temporarily ceased his activity as a composer. Thus, in 1849, he outlines his ideas about music and its social role in *Art and Revolution* and *The Art-Work of the Future*, ideas that will be detailed in his most important work *Opera and Drama* (1851). Wagner's prose project concluded in 1853 with *A Communication to My Friends*. Even though Wagner wrote those works during a short period of time,<sup>78</sup> the writings reveal an older interest in finding solutions to the problems raised by the uncertain social role of music. Even though his ideas are not fully organized in writing, there is a certain consistency in Wagner's approach to music and its place in society and culture in general.

An aspect of Wagner's attempt to establish the social role of music was his concern with the evolution of German opera. As early as his 1834 article "On German Opera," he identified that the lack of tradition in German opera was due to the neglect of German folk sources.<sup>79</sup> In order to revive German opera and to create an appropriate impact on German society, composers should use the folk heritage in their work. Only mythology can provide the best subject-matter for the ideal musical-dramatic artwork.<sup>80</sup> Even in this early writing, staged performances encompassing music, poetry and theatre were presented as best suited to carry messages to the audience, as Greek tragedy proved. This is the idea that Wagner will try to reinforce and further explain later, in *Opera and Drama*. Music, poetry and modern technology are the instruments that musical drama should use in order to make sure that the message is well perceived by the audience and thus the social role of art is accomplished. As Wagner believed that language was originally a form of music, the composer can find the most effective intermediate stage between the two, by combining music and poetry on stage.<sup>81</sup>

In *Art and Revolution* Wagner tried "to discover the meaning of Art as a factor in the life of the State, and to make ourselves acquainted with it as a social product".<sup>82</sup> Because an artist cannot exist in society if his only focus is on artistic creation (and not on social profit), Wagner considered the necessity of a revolution that would reposition

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<sup>78</sup> *Opera and Drama* was written in not more than four months.

<sup>79</sup> Alan David Aberbach, *The Ideas of Richard Wagner. An Examination and Analysis* (Maryland: University Press of America, 2003), 327-328.

<sup>80</sup> Thomas Grey, "Opera and Music Drama", *The Cambridge History of Nineteenth-Century Music*, Jim Samson, ed. (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2002), 389.

<sup>81</sup> Thomas S. Grey, "Music as Natural Language in the Moral Order of Wagner's *Ring*: Siegfried, Act 2, Scene 3", *Nineteenth-Century Music. Selected Proceedings of the Tenth International Conference*, Jim Samson and Bennett Zon, ed. (Burlington: Ashgate, 2002), 50.

<sup>82</sup> Alan David Aberbach, *The Ideas of Richard Wagner. An examination and Analysis of his major Aesthetic, Political, Economic, Social, and Religious Thought* (Maryland: University Press of America, 1988), 16.

the arts within the social and political system.<sup>83</sup> By initiating this theory, Wagner argued not only that there is an intrinsic connection between art and society, but he also militated for a relationship between the arts and the political and economic realm.<sup>84</sup> In this context, Wagner's attempt in *The Art-Work of the Future* was to indicate a way by which humanity can lead better lives through the means of art, which can serve as a focal point and instrument in order to build a better society, with an improved political and economical system.

But how exactly is art supposed to accomplish this major role in the destiny of humanity? First of all, in Wagner's opinion, art *should* be expressive. Moreover, art should express something in particular, namely reality and not fictional stories.<sup>85</sup> Secondly, there is only one form of art that is able to accomplish this: the music-drama. Music-drama is *the Art* in Wagner's view. Since music-drama consists of poetry, drama and music, all artistic forms have their role in the process.<sup>86</sup> The purpose of music-drama is attainable only by the combination of multiple artistic means of expression:

[Drama] can only be fully realized when each separate branch of art is utilized in its utmost fullness. The true Drama is only conceivable as proceeding from the united efforts of every art in the most direct appeal to a common public.<sup>87</sup>

In arguing for this new art form, Wagner undertook an analysis of the arts over the centuries, emphasizing their social and religious values and meanings. By observing the evolution of Greek tragedy – for him “the highest conceivable form of art” – and the evolution of the arts in Christianity, he identified a certain incompatibility between art and religion,<sup>88</sup> which will exclude religious elements from an ideal art-work. Also, by analyzing opera, he indicated that its failure to accomplish an appropriate social role was due to the fact that music is regarded as an end *per se*: “a Means of expression (music) has been made the end, while the End of expression (drama) has been made the means.”<sup>89</sup> This observation leads us to Wagner's theory of music and its purposes as related to the music-drama.

Wagner's ideas about music as a main component of the music-drama are exposed in detail in his work *Opera and Drama*. In Wagner's view music, like art in general, should be expressive. Music is not only about form, e.g. melody and harmony, but also about content, e.g. expression:

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<sup>83</sup> Ibid.

<sup>84</sup> Ibid., 18.

<sup>85</sup> Aberbach, *The Ideas of Richard Wagner*, 1988, 22.

<sup>86</sup> Ibid.

<sup>87</sup> Roger Hollinrake, “Nietzsche, Wagner and Ernest Newman,” *Music & Letters*, Vol. 41, No. 3, Jul., 1960, 248.

<sup>88</sup> This does not mean that there necessarily exists an incompatibility between art and God. Religious presumptions imposed by Christianity negatively influenced the development of the arts, not the actual belief in God.

<sup>89</sup> Aberbach, *The Ideas of Richard Wagner*, 1988, 23.

In performance the listener's attention should by no means be drawn to the effectiveness of the harmony as such, but to its silent power of determining the characteristic expression of the melody.<sup>90</sup>

Musical form is not to be used for purely aesthetic purposes, but as a means of expressing what language fails to express:

As organ of the feelings, it expresses precisely and exclusively that which language, by its very nature, is unable to express and therefore, from the point of view of the human intelligence, quite simply inexpressible.<sup>91</sup>

The expression of the verbally inexpressible is possible exclusively in orchestral works, for only the orchestra has "the power of uttering the verbally inexpressible." The fact that the orchestra can express the inexpressible proves that "this verbally inexpressible is not something essentially inexpressible, but simply something beyond expression by the organ of the human intelligence," which is speech.<sup>92</sup>

Music facilitates expression where language is ineffective, but does not have the precise characteristic of language. Music does not use concepts or ideas, "music cannot think, but it can substantialize thoughts, i.e. express their emotional content."<sup>93</sup> Because it is not a precise language, music can express precise emotional content only under certain conditions:

A musical motif can only produce an emotional effect that is precise and relates to a definite mental activity if the feeling expressed in the motif was presented to the imagination by a definite individual in relation to a definite object and itself clearly defined.<sup>94</sup>

The clearly defined relation of the individual to the object is an element that can be introduced only by means of human intelligence, i.e. speech. That is why music can be completely effective when in a symbiotic relation to poetry. Poetic and musical languages mutually reinforce each other. Both music and poetry can ideally use their power of expression when in collaboration. However, only "the composer's power is almost limitless," and not the poet's, as the composer is able to use the orchestra to "realize the poetical intention at the highest possible level."<sup>95</sup> Actually, a composer is not a complete artist if he has no poetic approach to his work:

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<sup>90</sup> Richard Wagner, "Opera und Drama" (fragments), *Music in European Thought. 1851-1912*, Bojan Bujic, ed. (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1988), 57.

<sup>91</sup> *Ibid.*, 60.

<sup>92</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>93</sup> *Ibid.*, 64.

<sup>94</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>95</sup> *Ibid.*, 63.

The poet and the musician resemble two travelers who set out from the same point and go in opposite directions, observing a straight line. At the opposite point on the earth's surface they meet again, each having covered one half of the planet....The poet has become a musician and the musician a poet: both are now complete artistic human beings.<sup>96</sup>

By stating the necessity of language in the process of musical expression, and also by supplementing his own musical work with theoretical explanations, Wagner recognizes that art has not yet attained its ideal form. This imperfection in the status of art determines the existence and development of art criticism and of the critic's perception of art. Wagner's theory of art calls it "the striving towards the annihilation of the reasons and grounds of criticism." When art will attain its ideal form of expression, there will be no need for criticism:

When what we wanted has been achieved in the real work of art [...] then our criticism is at an end. For then we have been redeemed, released from being critics and turned into artists and people enjoying art.<sup>97</sup>

Criticism could be valuable only if it were intrinsically related to the work of art: "This knowledge [about music] could only reveal itself as truly true if it necessarily pressed towards the actualization of the thing known, towards the production of *the real work of art itself*."<sup>98</sup> If this is not happening, once art attains its ideal form of expression, criticism will become useless and eventually cease to exist.

## Conclusions

My analysis of the main ideas exposed by Hanslick, Liszt and Wagner in their writings shows a strong interest from the authors not only in producing or evaluating music, but also in discussing and establishing the aesthetic and social role of music. While trying to offer arguments for music as being an aesthetic element vs. a social one, the discussion of the form of music as evolved over the century is inevitable. Thus, Hanslick makes a case for absolute music, more precisely, for pure music, without program, intended for pure beauty given by its form. Liszt and Wagner promote and develop program music, which is intended for expressing feelings and emotions, and eventually, for reviving (German) human culture. As we shall further see, their ideas can be easily related to contemporary philosophical and aesthetic tendencies. Before that, a closer look at music aesthetics, as it evolved over the decades of the 19<sup>th</sup> century, is necessary.

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<sup>96</sup> Ibid., 58.

<sup>97</sup> Susan Bernstein, "In Formel: Wagner und Liszt," *New German Critique*, No. 69, *Richard Wagner*, (Autumn, 1996), 89.

<sup>98</sup> Ibid.

CHAPTER II  
THE PHILOSOPHER'S PERSPECTIVE ON MUSIC  
IN THE 19<sup>TH</sup> CENTURY

**Music and Philosophy at the Beginning of the Century**

Before analyzing 19<sup>th</sup> century aesthetic theories and their development, a short consideration of the ideological heritage of the 18<sup>th</sup> century is necessary. As mentioned before, Kant dominates the aesthetic perspective on music at the beginning of the 19th century. In his *Critique of Judgment* (1790), Kant does not extensively discuss music. Even more, in his view, music occupies the lowest place among the arts, because it has no “cognitive” value. However, as sketchy and rather unfavorable as they are, Kant’s ideas on music will constitute the starting point for the formalist approach, and also the source for future aesthetic theories on music.

There is little information in Kant’s writings about his personal interest and taste in music. Judging from the information gathered in his biographies, Kant seemed to have enjoyed music, but did not possess a special interest in it. Moreover, he considered that there was too much effort needed in order to acquire musical knowledge. Ludwig Ernst Borowski, one of his biographers, writes: “when I was sixteen he discouraged me and many others among his students, from devoting myself to music study, since so much time is taken up before arriving at any degree of proficiency, and that to the detriment of more serious studies.”<sup>99</sup> Kant used to attend concerts and even opera in his youth, being more impressed by the emotional effects than the beauty of music. Thus, he found funeral music totally repugnant, but he liked music that generated positive emotions, like martial music.<sup>100</sup> His favorite musical work, which he once called “the highest of musical compositions of its kind,” seemed to have been a drinking song: “Crown with a Garland the Dear, Full Cup.”<sup>101</sup> In this context, it is not surprising that music does not win a privileged place in Kant’s aesthetic theory.

In his *Critique of Judgment*, Kant categorizes arts by comparing them with speech. Speech is divided into three elements: word, gesture, and tone. Any complete expression should be constituted by all these elements. As no art encompasses all elements, Kant identifies three categories of art: 1.) the speaking ones - poetry and eloquence; 2.) the plastic ones - sculpture, architecture, painting, gardening; and 3.) those

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<sup>99</sup> Herman Parret, “Kant on Music and the Hierarchy of the Arts,” *The Journal of Aesthetics and Art Criticism*, Vol. 56, No. 3 (Summer, 1990), 252.

<sup>100</sup> Ibid.

<sup>101</sup> Rudolph H. Weingarter, “A Note on Kant’s Artistic Interests,” *The Journal of Aesthetics and Art Criticism*, Vol. 16, No. 2 (Dec. 1957), 262.

of the play of beautiful sensations - music and the art of color.<sup>102</sup> As any other art, music consists of only one element, the tone in this case, which is the characteristic of speech that generates sensation.<sup>103</sup>

The main reason why music is placed by Kant on the lowest level of the arts is, the fact that music does not have a cognitive value, as mentioned before. In other words, for a fine art to be valuable in Kant's vision, it has to provide cultivation for the mind, to help the mind expand and enable its power of cognition to grow. Music is a challenge for the mind, but, as it proceeds from sensations to indeterminate ideas, it only produces a *transitory* impression.<sup>104</sup> Thus, the mind is challenged only temporarily, and after the listening act, it has no elements to relate to and meditate on. Considered by Kant a "beautiful play with sensations,"<sup>105</sup> music produces "charm and mental agitation."<sup>106</sup> This is the only quality that situates music on a higher level, after poetry. Music does not use concepts, as poetry does, and gives no meditative reasons, but it is a challenge for the human mind: "it agitates the mind more diversely and intensely" than poetry.

Nevertheless, even though music has the lowest place among the fine arts in Kant's view, "it has perhaps the highest among those valued at the same time for their agreeableness."<sup>107</sup> Indeed for Kant, music can be considered an agreeable art or a fine one. In order to illustrate the two possibilities of approaching music as art, Kant gives the example of the music played at banquets. Music as background can be considered an agreeable art, as it entertains for the moment, by its enjoyable "play of sensations." In the case one would try to actually listen to the music and hear the composition, music could be considered fine art, as the play of sensations is beautiful in itself, thus "agitating" the mind.<sup>108</sup> But this effect on human mind is "merely the effect of a more or less mechanical association," being mostly due to the numerical relationship between tones: "by means of affects consonant with this ratio, a continuous agitation and quickening of the mind, [...] they produce an appealing self-enjoyment."<sup>109</sup> As a result, music "possesses less worth in the eyes of reason than any other of the fine arts."

Another problem identified by Kant is that "music has a certain lack of urbanity." He makes a parallel with perfume, saying that music easily becomes "obtrusive and deprives others, outside the musical circle, of their freedom." As opposed to other types of art, which can be contemplated only if the viewer wants to, there is no way one could avoid hearing music that is played nearby:

Those who have recommended that the singing of hymns be included at family prayer have failed to consider that by such noisy (and precisely because of this usually pharisaical) worship they impose great hardship on the public, since they

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<sup>102</sup> Herbert M. Schueller, "Immanuel Kant and the Aesthetics of Music," *The Journal of Aesthetics and Art Criticism*, Vol. 14, No.2 (Dec., 1955), 218.

<sup>103</sup> Ibid. The correspondents of word and gesture are thought and intuition, respectively.

<sup>104</sup> Immanuel Kant, *Critique of Judgment* (Indianapolis: Hackett Publishing Company, 1987), 200.

<sup>105</sup> Ibid., 193.

<sup>106</sup> Ibid., 199.

<sup>107</sup> Ibid., 200.

<sup>108</sup> Schueller, 223.

<sup>109</sup> Ibid.

compel their neighbors either to join in the singing or put aside whatever they were thinking about.<sup>110</sup>

As my short analysis shows, in the context of Kant's musical interest and inclination, as well as from the perspective of cognitive properties, music could not gain a very high position in Kant's aesthetic theory. However, including and discussing music within a philosophical system constitutes a very important starting point for future theories, as we shall further see.

### Aesthetic Theories on Music during the 19<sup>th</sup> Century

During the 19<sup>th</sup> century, the status of music takes an unpredictable journey: from being placed on the lowest level amongst the arts to occupying the highest rank. At the beginning of the century, the aesthetic perspective on music was dominated by Kant's unfavorable definition. By the end of the century it culminated with Nietzsche's laudatory ideas. Indeed, the status of music was not only a matter of debate for music critics, but also for philosophers. While music critics tried to establish if the programmatic approach to music was an appropriate and a valuable one, philosophers started to include thoughts on music in their aesthetic theories. My goal in this chapter is to analyze the evolution of the status of music in aesthetic theories of the 19<sup>th</sup> century. My analysis will show that, even if the status of music was in a continuous evolution throughout these aesthetic theories, music was treated as a means to various superior ends. In the attempt of justifying music as a human activity, philosophers always considered music in connection with something else.

A closer investigation of 19<sup>th</sup> century aesthetic theories reveals two general and successive directions in the discussion of music: 1.) Music is seen as a means to the Absolute (Schelling, Hegel); and 2.) Music is seen as "alleviating the pain" of human existence (Kierkegaard, Schopenhauer). Nietzsche is the one who combines both tendencies. For him, music has the power to bring salvation to humanity, but it is also a representation of the essence of things. All approaches will be discussed from a chronological perspective, studying the evolution of the status of music in its progress.

#### Schelling and Hegel: Music as a Means to the Absolute

F. W. J. Schelling

F. W. J. Schelling (1775-1854) is one of the German philosophers who continued the aesthetic approach to music inaugurated by Kant. His lectures at the University of Jena between 1799 and 1805 make up the contents of the volume known as *Philosophy of Art*. His aesthetic view is a critique of Kant's position, from an idealistic point of view. In

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<sup>110</sup> Kant, 200, note 69.



Schelling's philosophical system, music also does not have a privileged place. It is true that Schelling discusses music in a more detailed way than Kant, presenting elements of rhythm, modulation and melody, but still, like in Kant's theory, music is considered among the lower of the arts. However, there is a notable new element: music becomes a medium of knowledge and is able to facilitate the access to the Absolute.

In order to understand how this ideological change was possible, it would be useful to consider the historical and cultural context in which Schelling developed his aesthetic theory. Schelling was a part of the circle of friends known today as the "Jena Romantics." This circle, which had a clear influence on Schelling's approach to arts and music, included Friedrich and August Wilhelm Schlegel, Caroline Schlegel, Ludwig Tieck, and Friedrich Schleiermacher.<sup>111</sup> As the arts figured among the main interests in the circle, Schelling's receptiveness towards it was augmented. To the extent he always believed that the philosophical *system* is the real way to find the truth, the arts had to be a part of this system. This is why Schelling decided to give lectures on art: in order to explain in more detail what he had already outlined in his *System of Transcendental Idealism* (1800).

The central issue in Schelling's system and in romantic philosophy in general is the possibility of human beings attaining the Absolute, in order to know the truth about the world. While for Kant humans had no access to the essence of things, the so-called *noumenon*, but only to the *phenomena*, their appearance, for Schelling, humans can have access to the essence, to the Absolute. The only problem is that the Absolute is not a thing and, therefore, it cannot be conceptualized. Thus, rationality has a hard time trying to approach the Absolute. This is where the arts come on the stage. For Schelling, the idealistic world of art and the real world objects are the product of the same process: the combination of conscious and unconscious activity.<sup>112</sup> The arts do not represent objects, but merely ideas of objects, being an excellent medium of knowledge and facilitating the access to the Absolute.

Schelling's lectures on *The Philosophy of Art* brought new perspectives on the topic, changing to some degree the statements previously argued. While in his system, the arts were the only way of approaching the Absolute, something that could not be achieved by rationality and philosophy, in the lectures, the arts lose some of their predominance to philosophy.<sup>113</sup> They are still the only instrument to be used where concepts are of no help, but they are subordinated to philosophy or to the philosopher. Even so, the arts remain in the center of the most important philosophical discussions of the early 19<sup>th</sup> century: the access to the truth, also known as the Absolute.

In the context mentioned above, music suddenly becomes a very important instrument of philosophy, in the attempt of approaching the Absolute. Schelling treats art as the keystone in the arch of philosophy.<sup>114</sup> This is an important qualitative step from

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<sup>111</sup> Hammermeister, 65.

<sup>112</sup> James Lindsay, "The Philosophy of Schelling", *The Philosophical Review*, Vol. 19, No. 3 (May, 1910), 272.

<sup>113</sup> *Ibid.*, 77.

<sup>114</sup> Herbert M. Schueller, "Schelling's Theory of the Metaphysics of Music", *The Journal of Aesthetics and Art Criticism*, Vol. 15, No. 4 (Jun., 1957), 461.

where Kant placed music less than fifteen years before. From a simple form of entertainment to an essential instrument in discovering truth, the role of music changed not only from an aesthetic point of view, but also from a cultural and social one. This is the actual beginning of the ideological evolution in the status of music in the 19<sup>th</sup> century.

Even if Schelling had no special music studies, his writing about music shows a real interest in the subject, with some knowledge of the theory and history of music. There are three dimensions that Schelling discusses in relation to music: rhythm, modulation, and melody. Rhythm, the first dimension, qualifies music for reflection and self-consciousness; modulation, the second one, for feeling and judgment, and melody, the third dimension, for intuition and power of imagination.<sup>115</sup> Each element has a determining role, which I will further explore.

“Neither can one easily deny that everything one can call truly beautiful in music or dance actually has to do with the rhythm.” Indeed, rhythm is the most important dimension according to Schelling, being the one that encompasses the other two dimensions. It can be considered “the entirety of music.” Being “the periodic subdivision of homogeneity,” rhythm is unity in multiplicity. Modulation is considered to be “the art of maintaining the identity of the one tone that is the predominating one within the whole of a musical work.”<sup>116</sup> While rhythm can be considered as a quantitative unity, modulation is a qualitative one. As opposed to rhythm, Schelling presents harmony as representing multiplicity within unity. Harmony brings sounds together: “harmony consists of different tonal relationships within each of these units, nonetheless being brought into a unity within the whole.”<sup>117</sup> As a result of different natures, rhythmic music “which represents the infinite within the finite, will be more the expression of satisfaction and of vigorous passion,” while harmonic music “will be the expression of striving and of yearning.”<sup>118</sup> By analyzing the elements that constitute music, Schelling concludes that “the forms of music are the forms of eternal things seen from the realistic side,” as if the platonic idea finally finds its embodiment in art.<sup>119</sup>

Schelling insists on the fact that some of the terms he uses in this context (modulation, for example) have not the specific meaning in use at the time (and also today). He wants to develop an aesthetic theory that could be applied to any kind of music, not only to Western classical music. This intention of his is closely related to his non-evolutionary view of arts: for Schelling, it is perfectly natural that different times and places have different artistic manifestations. For this reason, he takes into account different types of music, mentioning Greek music, medieval music etc. His theory addresses music in general: it seems to have no direct relation to the musical life at the time, but merely engages with contemporary aesthetic ideas.

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<sup>115</sup> F. W. J. Schelling, *The Philosophy of Art*, translated by Douglas W. Stott (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 1989), 112.

<sup>116</sup> Schelling, 111.

<sup>117</sup> *Ibid.*, 114.

<sup>118</sup> *Ibid.*, 115.

<sup>119</sup> Schueller, “Schelling’s Theory of the Metaphysics of Music,” 473.

## G. W. F. Hegel

Hegel will be the philosopher to define even more clearly the place that Schelling reserved for music in his own system. Even if the place of music in the Hegelian system is not very different from where Schelling situated it, Hegel treats music as never before in philosophical writing. One can find diverse information about music in Hegel: examples from old and recent compositions, short excerpts of music criticism, comparisons of national styles and preferences in music, discussions of different types of performances and accompaniment, theory and harmony, and ideas on the role of composers and performers. Even if not all the comments are exactly those with which a practicing musician would agree, Hegel satisfies the need of detail in discussing music from an aesthetic point of view. The reader can get a very clear idea about music, its object and status in comparison with the other arts, and its function in the so-called "journey of the Spirit."

There are three ways in which the Spirit can achieve the Absolute and have access to the truth: the arts, religion, and philosophy. Unlike Schelling in his earlier writings, Hegel does not situate the arts on a higher level than philosophy. What prevents Hegel from situating the arts in a better position within the system is the discrepancy between the work of art and what it means to represent.<sup>120</sup> Thus, the arts are only *one* way of achieving the Absolute, not *the* way. He considers the arts from a historical perspective that also reveals a coherent change in the materials employed by each type of art. In this context, music is considered a *romantic* art, an art that "finally annihilates not merely one form of spatial dimension, but the conditions of Space entirely."<sup>121</sup>

Even if music does not rank as highly as poetry or philosophy, it still has a privileged place in Hegel's theory. Having no other material besides sound places music high within the hierarchy. The certain freedom that music has in expressing feelings and emotions is another valuable quality that music possesses for Hegel. This brings music very close to the representation of the absolute idea for the Spirit. However, the spiritual content of music does not reside in the feelings/emotions aroused. The Spirit is looking for the reflection of its inner life. In this context, the free character of music becomes vague. This is where poetry has more to add: not being anchored in representational materiality like plastic arts, and having the word as medium, poetry can express emotions as they are. While music only suggests and approximates, poetry fully discloses.<sup>122</sup>

Hegel's theory is so broad in its debate on music that it even encompasses a discussion about the issue of absolute vs. program music. This aspect will draw the attention of the music critics of the time. For Hegel, the only materiality in music is the tone. Hegel finds that the tone and its imprecise and temporary presence bring a kind of freedom in the interpretation and perception of music. For this reason, musical content is

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<sup>120</sup> Gary Shapiro, "Hegel's Dialectic of Artistic Meaning." *The Journal of Aesthetics and Art Criticism*, Vol. 35, No.1 (Autumn, 1976), 25.

<sup>121</sup> G. W. F. Hegel, *The Philosophy of Fine Art*, Vol. 3, translated by F.P.B. Osmaston (New York: Hacker Art Books, 1975), 340.

<sup>122</sup> Wayne D. Bowman, *Philosophical Perspectives on Music* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1998), 106.

hard to grasp. Hegel argues that music, being only “an essentially complete series of combinations, modifications, contrasts and modulations,” is “empty, without significance,”<sup>123</sup> because it has no spiritual content and expression. Words “enforce and enhance” music,<sup>124</sup> even when different verses of a poem are set to the same music. The chances for the Spirit to experience the ideal are augmented if the instrument used in performing the music is the human voice, as Hegel considers it to be “the most complete instrument of all.”<sup>125</sup> However, the presence of words does not guarantee a “spiritual import,” which can actually be realized also by means of harmony and melody. One should not rely on the text for understanding music because 1.) the words are not a guarantee that the Spirit actually perceives the spiritual content and 2.) as he says: “in cases where the music receives a more artistic elaboration, the audience understands next to nothing of the text.”<sup>126</sup> It seems that Hegel cannot find a perfect way of combining the concepts of form and content in music. Both can make possible the absolute idea; as long as the ideal is attained, it is less important if the music is with or without text.

So far, my investigation revealed that Schelling and Hegel counted among the first philosophers to consider music as a necessary part of their system. Starting with them, music was regarded as a means in the attempt of approaching the Absolute or the truth. Even if music is not yet considered one of the most effective arts in discovering the truth, it does have a determinate place in the aforementioned philosophical systems. As a result, some musical aspects are described in detail, as they are considered important in the context of the aesthetic theories. The interest of the philosophers in the possibilities of knowledge presented by music determined some music critics to explore several ideas exposed in these aesthetic theories. Their action constitutes the first step to the philosopher/musician communication that will reach its peak at the end of the century. This is a time when philosophers acknowledge that music is an important part of human existence. In the attempt to define the role of music for society and human existence and establish a status, philosophers explain the importance of music, making it the subordinate of a noble purpose.

### Kierkegaard and Schopenhauer: Music and “Pain”

Once music is an important topic for aesthetic debates, many possibilities for approaching it appear. The social and economic context of the time invited intellectuals to pay more attention to music. As most of them were personally invested in music, the theories they elaborated encompassed music not only as a theoretical requirement, but also as a personal experience. This was the case for Schopenhauer, Kierkegaard and Nietzsche. Being more involved in the musical life of the time than their predecessors, these philosophers wrote theories that reflect a strong interest in and appreciation of music. This situation is reflected in the approaches they chose, approaches that connect

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<sup>123</sup> Hegel, 357.

<sup>124</sup> Ibid., 409.

<sup>125</sup> Ibid., 383.

<sup>126</sup> Ibid., 356.

music more with the pain of human existence than with potentially unattainable ideals. As in the contemporary belief that human existence is similar to Sisyphus' work, for Schopenhauer, Kierkegaard and Nietzsche, only music can relieve some of the pain encountered. In this context, music can be used as means to a more quiet and coherent existence.

### Arthur Schopenhauer

If certain of his predecessors talked about music only as one of the arts, and most of the time not the best one in terms of representing the Absolute, Schopenhauer places music at the highest level. This is the first time in a philosophical writing when music stands at the zenith. For Schopenhauer, music

is such a great and exceedingly noble art, its effect on the inmost nature of man is so powerful, and it is so entirely and deeply understood by him in his inmost consciousness as a perfectly universal language, the distinctness of which surpasses even that of the perceptible world itself.<sup>127</sup>

While the arts in general represent the Idea, music goes even further: "Music is by no means like the other arts, the copy of the Ideas, but the *copy of the Will itself*, whose objectivity the Ideas are."<sup>128</sup> The argument for Schopenhauer's position is not very different than in previous theories. Music, not being conceptual, can pass over Ideas (which represent the goal of the other arts) and be the objectification of the Will. However, compared to previous aesthetic theories, an important difference in the goal of the aesthetic experience changes the core of Schopenhauer's aesthetic approach. It is true that the metaphor of the unattainable is to be found in Schopenhauer's philosophy as well as in previous theories. But in this case, we are dealing with the Will.

What is Will? All human actions are the result of the Will, which represents the most powerful human characteristic, even more powerful than reason. In this new context, the role of the arts, and especially the role of music, is not that of a means to the end named "knowledge of the Truth" or "of the Absolute," but that of diminishing the "angst" produced by the continuous manifestation of the Will. Because music is the unmediated expression of the Will, it gives us access to the knowledge of the world, which is the manifestation of the Will, and thus, to the knowledge of all the suffering resulting from the desire generated by Will. But, at the same time, music offers relief from the pain caused by the continuously unsatisfied desire, thus being the only art that can symbolize the essential tension between knowledge and desire.<sup>129</sup> Music is not just a way of knowledge, but, moreover, one of dealing with existence.

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<sup>127</sup> Arthur Schopenhauer, *The World as Will and Idea*, translated by R.B. Haldane and J. Kemp (New York: AMS Press, 1977), 330.

<sup>128</sup> *Ibid.*, 333.

<sup>129</sup> Lydia Goehr, "Schopenhauer and the Musicians: An Inquiry into the Sounds of Silence and the Limits of Philosophizing about Music," *Schopenhauer, Philosophy and the Arts*, Salim Kemal and Ivan Gaskell, eds. (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1996), 210.

There are two main elements that influenced Schopenhauer's philosophy about the burden of existence and music as relief: his early contact with the misery of human life and his musically oriented activities. As regards to the first factor, in his youth Schopenhauer traveled throughout Europe with his parents. The impact of the numerous prostitutes, prisons and the poverty had a very strong impact on him. He writes:

In my 17th year, without any learned school education, I was gripped by the misery of life, as was Buddha in his youth when he looked upon sickness, old age, pain, and death... and my conclusion was that this world could not be the work of an all-good being, but rather that of a devil who had brought creatures into existence in order to take delight in their suffering: to this the data pointed, and the belief that it is so won the upperhand.<sup>130</sup>

Schopenhauer had the opportunity to engage in musical activities while living in several cities that had vivid cultural and musical lives. As his mother's salon in Weimar was frequently visited by many artistic and cultural personalities, Schopenhauer had the opportunity to meet important writers like Goethe, Schlegel or Grimm, thus becoming aware of literary and philosophical trends.<sup>131</sup> After finishing his studies in philosophy, Schopenhauer moved to Dresden. Here, as well as later in Berlin and Frankfurt, he attended many opera and concerts, while cultivating his musical abilities by playing daily the flute.<sup>132</sup> The exposure to the intense musical life of the time greatly influenced Schopenhauer's attitudes toward music. His musical knowledge will be manifest in his work in detailed passages about specific musical elements, like intervals and related keys.

In Schopenhauer's theory, music is the only art that does not try to represent ideas – the objectivation of the Will – as other arts do, but is an unmediated expression of the Will. Moreover, Schopenhauer even makes an analogy between music and ideas:

Since, however, it is the same Will which objectifies itself both in the Ideas and in music, though in quite different ways, there must be, not indeed a direct likeness, but yet a parallel, an analogy between the music and the Ideas whose manifestation in multiplicity and incompleteness is the visible world.<sup>133</sup>

As music is considered to be able to go beyond the world of appearance and actually reveal aspects of a transcendental reality, the Will, Schopenhauer's musical aesthetics can be considered a "revelation" theory, using the term of Philip Alperson.<sup>134</sup> The revelation theory of music originates in Plato's *Timaeus*: The sensible world, a copy

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<sup>130</sup> John E. Atwell, "Art as Liberation: a Central Theme of Schopenhauer's Philosophy," *Schopenhauer, Philosophy and the Arts*, (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1996), 81.

<sup>131</sup> L. Dunton Green, "Schopenhauer and Music," *The Musical Quarterly*, Vol. 16, No. 2 (Apr., 1930), 199.

<sup>132</sup> *Ibid.*, 200.

<sup>133</sup> Schopenhauer, 333.

<sup>134</sup> Philip Alperson, "Schopenhauer and Musical Revelation," *The Journal of Aesthetics and Art Criticism*, Vol. 40, No. 2 (Winter, 1981), 159.

of the Ideas, is constituted from an invisible “world-soul” and a body. The structure of the “world-soul” is created to follow the intervals of the Dorian scale, thus making the soul of a musical nature. As the “body,” meaning the visible world, is a material manifestation of the musical “world-soul,” it is only the musical elements that can offer a clue about the world of Ideas.<sup>135</sup> Elements of this theory can be also found in the observations of E.T.A. Hoffmann, Beethoven or Schelling, but Schopenhauer’s approach is a more explicit one, which will greatly influence Nietzsche and Wagner.<sup>136</sup> What is new in Schopenhauer’s reiteration of this theory is that, as opposed to the previously discussed view of Schelling, for example, only music can have access to the transcendent world, in this case, the Will. There are no other artistic means able to realize this task. By putting it this way, Schopenhauer strengthens the revelation idea.<sup>137</sup>

It is only nature that has the same status in Schopenhauer’s philosophy: “we can regard the phenomenal world, or nature and music, as two different expressions of the same instance.”<sup>138</sup> However, nature has no role in the attempt of human nature to cope with the pain caused by the endless manifestation of the Will. It is only in the aesthetic experience of music where one can find some comfort, without denying the existence of the Will or its characteristics.

Music may not use concepts, but it is also hard to conceptualize. Therefore Schopenhauer uses the similarity between the phenomenal world and music in order to illustrate his opinions on music. Through the parallel with nature, musical elements gain coherence within Schopenhauer’s aesthetic position. From this perspective, the bass finds its correspondent in inorganic nature: “I recognize in the deepest tones of harmony, in the bass, the lowest grades of the objectification of will, unorganized nature, the mass of the planet.”<sup>139</sup> The tenor and alto are the botanical and animal objectifications of the Will: “Those nearer to the bass are the lower of these grades, the still unorganized, but yet manifold phenomenal things; the higher represent to me the world of plants and beasts.”<sup>140</sup> Finally, the soprano has a correspondence to human nature, capable of knowledge and, consequently, of pain: “In the melody, in the high, singing, principal voice [...] I recognize the highest grade of the objectification of will, the intellectual life and effort of man.”<sup>141</sup> Furthermore, the way in which the voices are treated inside a musical piece reflects even more the legitimacy of the parallel employed by Schopenhauer.

Schopenhauer had a major impact on contemporary composers. Perhaps no other philosopher or philosophical work received so much attention from so many musicians in the same time. Wagner, Liszt, Dvorak, Mahler – these are only a few composers who were acquainted with Schopenhauer’s ideas on music. He managed to

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<sup>135</sup> Ibid.

<sup>136</sup> Ibid..

<sup>137</sup> Ibid., 160.

<sup>138</sup> Schopenhauer, 339.

<sup>139</sup> Ibid., 333.

<sup>140</sup> Ibid., 334.

<sup>141</sup> Ibid., 335.

offer a strong enough argument for music to be considered a universal language, capable of representing the essence of the world, by manifesting a similar structure.

### Søren Kierkegaard

Schopenhauer was not the only philosopher to rank music highly. In Kierkegaard's approach, music is also the best way of diminishing the pain of existence. As opposed to his contemporary German philosophers, Kierkegaard offers a mixed message about music and its status in relation to human existence and ideals. Music is the best means of expression for the aesthetic individual. For Kierkegaard, the arts and aesthetic experience are limited to one existential stage: the aesthetic stage.

There are three possible stages of existence for Kierkegaard: the aesthetic stage, the ethic stage, and the religious one. It is not necessary for one person to complete all stages and, even though they have specific characteristics, they can overlap during one's life. The aesthetic stage is the lowest and most undesirable stage from an existential perspective. It is only in the third stage, i.e. the religious stage, where one could find individual fulfillment in a privileged relation to God. In the intermediary stage – the ethical – the person has to get rid of the sensuous character of her experiences, which is the human characteristic most frequently emphasized by the arts, in the lower, aesthetic stage. And still, in such a totally different approach to the arts (a rather negative one), music is the only art extensively debated and is ranked highest among them. Music is the best companion for the aesthetic individual, who indulges herself in the lowest stage of human existence.

In *Either/Or*, Kierkegaard presents the first two stages, the aesthetic and the ethic. The aesthetic stage, debated in the first volume of the book, is represented by "A," the aesthetic individual. His existence is defined as a life lived in immediacy and sensuous experience, without determination or specific goals of any kind. In the second volume, "B," the ethic individual also known as Judge William, presents the advantages of an ethic type of existence, making a case for choices well made and, eventually, making a case for marriage. In his attempt of convincing A of the aesthetic validity of marriage, Judge William discusses the notion of time. While for the aesthete, time is a burden and attempts to ruin personal happiness, for the ethic individual, time is a category that becomes meaningful through marriage.<sup>142</sup> The perception of temporality is the key element in the relationship between the aesthetic stage and the arts. Even though the arts cannot give a real temporal dimension to existence, they can create the illusion of a "frozen spatial existence."<sup>143</sup> In Kierkegaard's view, the artist escapes his painful existence by finding in his activity a deceiving relief of personal suffering.<sup>144</sup> As a consequence, works of art can offer the same relief to the aesthetic individual. As the arts

<sup>142</sup> Sylvia Walsh, *Living Poetically. Kierkegaard's Existential Aesthetics* (University Park, Pennsylvania: The Pennsylvania State University Press, 1994), 120.

<sup>143</sup> Bernard Zelechow, "Kierkegaard, the Aesthetic and Mozart's Don Giovanni," *Kierkegaard on Art and Communication*, George Pattison, ed. (New York: St. Martin's Press Inc., 1992), 74.

<sup>144</sup> *Ibid.*, 73.



distract the individual from aspiring to higher stages, they cannot be valued in any other stage than the aesthetic one.

As opposed to Hegel, Kierkegaard considers that one cannot decide a hierarchy among the arts only taking into consideration the medium. In his opinion, in the so-called "classic" works of art one should find an "absolute correlation" of form and subject matter, that is, medium and idea. As both medium and idea can have a certain degree of concreteness or abstractness, different arts can generate more classics than the other. All classic works of art have the same value and the balance between their form and content should make later reflective ages unable to separate them. Given their nature, there are more classics that combine a concrete idea with a concrete medium than classics that combine an abstract idea with an abstract medium. Even though "all classic productions rank equally high, because each one ranks infinitely high," Kierkegaard prefers the abstract ones, because:

The more abstract and thus the more impoverished the idea is, the more abstract and thus the more impoverished the medium is; hence the greater is the probability that no repetition can be imagined, and the greater is the probability that when the idea has acquired its expression it has acquired once for all.<sup>145</sup>

Music is an abstract medium for Kierkegaard. The most abstract idea conceivable is the *sensuous*, which "cannot be caught in definite contours," as "in its lyricism, it is a force, a wind, impatience, passion, etc., yet in such a way that it exists not in one instant but in a succession of instants, ... it continually moves within immediacy."<sup>146</sup> Music "has an element of time in itself but nevertheless does not take place in time except metaphorically," thus being the only art that can express the sensuous. Therefore, the absolute theme of music is the erotic sensuous.<sup>147</sup> That music is the perfect expression for the sensuous is also proved by the attitude of the Christianity. Kierkegaard remarks that both music and sensuous experience were undertaken by Christianity with negation and elimination. While the sensuous experience was eliminated for being an inappropriate Christian experience, music, considered "daemonic," had to be eliminated too, for representing the sensuous.<sup>148</sup>

The sensuous experiences manifest themselves in three different ways: dreaming, seeking and desiring. The dreaming is best represented by the Page in Mozart's *Figaro*, the seeking is represented by Papageno in *The Magic Flute*, and the desiring by the main character of *Don Giovanni*. Only in the latter work does the erotic sensuous find its complete expression of all three types of desire.<sup>149</sup> "A," the aesthetic individual, considers that Mozart's *Don Giovanni* is *the* absolute work of art and the only classic,

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<sup>145</sup> Søren Kierkegaard, *Either/Or*, Part I, translated by Howard V. Kong and Edna H. Hong (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1987) p. 54.

<sup>146</sup> *Ibid.*, 56.

<sup>147</sup> This does not mean that music cannot express many other things.

<sup>148</sup> Kierkegaard, 64.

<sup>149</sup> *Ibid.*, 85.

because it is capable of expressing the most abstract idea, being the result of the most fortunate encounter of the composer with a subject matter:

In Mozart's *Don Giovanni*, we have the perfect unity of this idea and its corresponding form. But precisely because the idea is so very abstract, there is no probability that Mozart will ever have a competitor. Mozart's good fortune is that he has found a subject matter that is intrinsically altogether musical, and if any other composer were to compete with Mozart, there would be nothing for him to do except to compose *Don Giovanni* all over again.<sup>150</sup>

Even though *Don Giovanni* is an operatic work, while attending its performance, "as soon as the eyes are involved, the impression is disrupted, for the dramatic unity that presents itself to the eye is altogether subordinate and deficient in comparison with the musical unity that is heard simultaneously."<sup>151</sup>

Kierkegaard was one of the first philosophers to offer detailed commentaries on specific musical works. In November 1835, Kierkegaard attended for the first time the performance of *Don Giovanni*.<sup>152</sup> This work impressed him so much, that he attended all the following performances. After four years, he wrote in his journal: "For to tell the truth, it is this piece which has affected me so diabolically that I can never forget it."<sup>153</sup> Even though Mozart's *Don Giovanni* is discussed extensively by Kierkegaard, there is little attention paid to music from a purely theoretical point of view, but merely as an artistic medium. Even so, as the above analysis shows, the impact of Mozart's work is to be found in Kierkegaard's aesthetic theory, bringing music to the center of a philosophical discussion as the only art that qualifies as the perfect expression of the absolute idea, and the most privileged art in the aesthetic stage.

### Nietzsche: Music at its Highest

From a musician's perspective, Nietzsche's theory of music seems to be exactly what was needed in order to dominate ideologically the 19<sup>th</sup> century. Nietzsche's aesthetic theory not only places music at the highest level among the arts, but also points to specific composers and musical styles, in order to argue and support his point of view. With a musical talent that manifested itself in several early compositions, Nietzsche seemed to have had a special gift for a philosopher: the ability to recognize musical values. After more than a century, his musical choices, starting with Bach and ending

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<sup>150</sup> Ibid., 57.

<sup>151</sup> Ibid., 120.

<sup>152</sup> Allastair Hannay, *Kierkegaard. A Biography* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2001), 61.

<sup>153</sup> Ibid.

with Wagner,<sup>154</sup> still stand at the top of the list of the most appreciated composers of Western art music.

Nietzsche's philosophical writings quite overshadowed his musical activities. Thus, it was only in 1976 that his musical works were first published.<sup>155</sup> However, even if his music was eventually performed and recorded, it is still disregarded. Nietzsche focused on composing in his youth, starting when he was a teenager. With no musical studies, Nietzsche realized in his university years that his lack of more specific musical knowledge (especially counterpoint) would prevent him from appropriately expressing himself.<sup>156</sup> He wrote many songs and pieces for piano, most of them as presents for family and friends, but also orchestral pieces and chamber music. His hope was that people would sing in his memory one of his last compositions, an arrangement for voice and piano of the poem "Hymn to Life," by Lou Andreas-Salome, dated 1882.<sup>157</sup>

But Nietzsche's relation to music was more complex than that. He was a good piano improviser, finding a means of personal expression through it. After giving up composing, Nietzsche continued to be a devoted listener and amateur music critic, as a result of his closeness to the musical world. One can find in his letters ideas like: "The good old time is gone, in Mozart we hear its swan song,"<sup>158</sup> and "melody is the ultimate and most sublime art of art."<sup>159</sup> Let us have a look at the aesthetic justification for Nietzsche's attitude towards music.

In his 1872 book, *The Birth of Tragedy*, Nietzsche argues that religion and philosophy cannot help in the knowledge and understanding of the conditions of human existence.<sup>160</sup> Strongly influenced by Schopenhauer, Nietzsche considered that only art gives man the opportunity to experience and express the pain of existence, thus art is the most important goal of this life.<sup>161</sup> In order to support his argument, Nietzsche undertook an analysis of the Greek arts. His starting point was Greek tragedy, which he regarded as encompassing elements from many different arts, as did Wagner. As music is one of the main elements discussed, Nietzsche's point was to show that, in an era when science tends to reign, it is only the revival of music and myth that could bring salvation to the (German) people. He considers that German music is for the German people that which tragedy had been for the Greeks: "in the midst of all our culture it is really the only genuine, pure and purifying fire-spirit from which and towards which all things move."<sup>162</sup> German musical values are to be found "from Bach to Beethoven, from Beethoven to

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<sup>154</sup> Later in life, Nietzsche radically changed his attitude towards Wagner and his music. His reasons are discussed in the third chapter of this thesis.

<sup>155</sup> Georges Liebert, *Nietzsche and Music* (Chicago: The University of Chicago Press, 2004), vii.

<sup>156</sup> "Friedrich Nietzsche: Compositions of his Childhood and Youth (1857-63)," *Nietzsche's Music* (<http://www.nietzsche.ru/english/music.php3>, accessed 2005/12/03).

<sup>157</sup> Liebert, vii. There is no connection between this work and Frederick Delius' setting of Nietzsche's words, "A Mass of life."

<sup>158</sup> Ibid., 185.

<sup>159</sup> Ibid., 192.

<sup>160</sup> Hammermeister, 140.

<sup>161</sup> Ibid., 141.

<sup>162</sup> Friedrich Nietzsche, *The Complete Works of Friedrich Nietzsche*, Vol 1. *The Birth of Tragedy*, translated by Wm. A. Hausmann (New York: Russell & Russell Inc., 1964), p. 151.

Wagner,”<sup>163</sup> but, as Nietzsche wrote in a century when programmatic music took control and culminated in Wagner’s *Gesamtkunstwerk*. He considered that Wagner and his works were representative for his theory, at least at the beginning of his career.

There are two criteria by which Nietzsche defined arts: Apollonian and Dionysian. As the names show, these terms are related to the two Greek gods. Nietzsche considers that, for Greek culture, Apollo and Dionysius are a tangible way of expressing what we now express by abstract concepts.<sup>164</sup> While Apollo “rules over the fair appearance of the inner world of fantasies,” Dionysius’ influence is similar to that of “narcotic draught,” together creating the expression of “the separate art-worlds of *dreamland* and *drunkenness*.”<sup>165</sup> Thus, while Apollonian emotions – dreamlike – have no direct connection to the real world, and are meant to distract man from the terror of existence, Dionysian emotions are the result of a combination of real elements and fantasy and thus they can constitute a reflection of the conditions of human existence. Apollonian emotions are related to individual experiences, as the individual experiencing them is ruled by *principium individuationis*.<sup>166</sup> The same principle is disregarded by Dionysian emotions (thus the related Dionysian festival, where all social and moral rules valid in the rest of the year are broken in the celebrating days). Considering the Apollonian and Dionysian characteristics in the different categories of art, Nietzsche ranks the plastic arts as Apollonian, and poetry as encompassing both characteristics. For Nietzsche, music is a Dionysian art: “The Dionysian musician is, without any picture, himself just primordial pain and the primordial re-echoing thereof.”<sup>167</sup> The Dionysian character is identified by the fact that music can increase awareness with regard to the shared experience that is existence. Like music, which is shared by its listeners, fundamental characteristics of existence are a common experience to all people.<sup>168</sup>

Borrowing ideas from Plato and Kant, Nietzsche defines music as “a universal language” that “resembles geometrical figures and numbers.”<sup>169</sup> Music “represents the metaphysical of everything physical in the world, and the thing-in-itself of every phenomenon.” Because “music symbolizes a sphere that is above all appearance and before all phenomena,” it does not need pictures or concepts in order to express feelings, but “only endures them as accompaniments.”<sup>170</sup>

The fact that music has a central role in Nietzsche’s philosophy is not only the result of the evolution of aesthetics in the 19<sup>th</sup> century. Furthermore, it is not just related to the contemporary changes in music or the striving of programmatic music for aesthetic recognition at the time. Music for Nietzsche was not only the most important art, but it

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<sup>163</sup> Ibid.

<sup>164</sup> Andrew Bowie, *Aesthetics and Subjectivity: From Kant to Nietzsche* (Manchester: Manchester University Press, 1990), 222.

<sup>165</sup> Nietzsche, 22.

<sup>166</sup> Hammermeister, 139.

<sup>167</sup> Nietzsche, 46.

<sup>168</sup> Kathleen Higgins, “Nietzsche on Music” *Journal of the History of Ideas*, Vol. 47, No.4 (Oct. - Dec., 1986), 667.

<sup>169</sup> Nietzsche, 123-124.

<sup>170</sup> Ibid., 55.

was also a way of life. Nietzsche ranks among those few philosophers and aestheticians of the 19<sup>th</sup> century who give us reason to consider him also a musician.

### **Conclusions**

The purpose of the above investigation was to discover and understand the connection between aesthetic theories and how the status of music evolved so dramatically during the 19<sup>th</sup> century. The consideration of several aesthetic approaches of music revealed that, while at the beginning of the century music was barely included in aesthetic writing, at the end of the century it became a nucleus of philosophical investigations.

Schelling and Hegel developed Kant's ideas in an idealistic manner, thus making music into a way to knowledge. Schopenhauer and Kierkegaard made the connection between music and existence, considering music a way of leading a less painful life. Then, Nietzsche described music as the reflection of the universe and the unique possible salvation of human kind. The example provided by Nietzsche's proves that one's own musical experience brings more understanding and appreciation of music and its role for human existence. Music was such an important part of Nietzsche's life that his aesthetic theory ended up becoming an appraisal of music.

In the context of the flowering musical life of the time, the desire of elaborating an exhaustive philosophical system and the progressive exposure of the philosophers to music are only two of the reasons that determined the evolution of ideas on music. While the first reason only brought an introductory consideration of music as medium for attaining noble purposes like the Absolute, Truth, or the Will, the last reason determined philosophers to analyze music in relation to human existence and its problems. The recognition of music and its qualities in German aesthetic theories at the end of the 19<sup>th</sup> century was a result that can be considered one of the most important points in the history of music. The next chapter of this thesis reveals the influence of the above discussed theories on the music criticism of the time, which, in its turn, influenced the evolution of aesthetic ideology in the 19<sup>th</sup> century.

CHAPTER III  
MUTUAL INFLUENCES BETWEEN AESTHETIC THEORIES  
ON MUSIC  
AND MUSIC CRITICISM

After investigating the evolution of ideas on music in both music criticism and aesthetics of the 19<sup>th</sup> century, my goal is to show how these two areas influenced each other over the decades. In order to find evidence for my argument, I will focus on the writings of the music critics discussed in chapter I of this thesis, showing the influence of aesthetic theories as laid out in Chapter II, as well as on one philosopher who was strongly influenced by a musician. Thus, this chapter comprises four sections: the first one is dedicated to the influence of Kant on Hanslick; the second one deals with the influence of Hegel on Liszt; the third section is concerned with Schopenhauer's influence on Wagner. Finally, I will discuss the influence of Wagner on Nietzsche's life and work.

**Kant and Hanslick**

Eduard Hanslick wrote his aesthetic theory with regard to music and its aesthetic value in a century when the values of the new program music started to replace the old values of absolute music. The first question that arises when analyzing Hanslick's strong position on absolute music is, no doubt, what was the ideological fundament of his thinking? As mentioned in Chapter I, Hanslick wrote his book, *On the Musically Beautiful*, after studying the extant aesthetic theories on music and realizing that a more detailed aesthetic approach of music is needed. Judging by the specific approach that Hanslick preferred, it seems that Kant's theory of the arts had a significant impact.

Before analyzing Hanslick's relation to Kant's aesthetic work, there is another element that is worth mentioning. Besides being an aesthetic formalist statement, Hanslick's theory makes a strong case against the idea that music is meant to represent emotions. As Carl Dahlhaus observes, Hanslick's attempt in this direction is not the first one. In his *Phantasien über die Kunst*, published in 1799, Ludwig Tieck started a discourse against the doctrine of sensibility, which claimed that "music was a means of collecting the stray feelings in life."<sup>171</sup> In his work, Tieck praises instrumental music, considering that it "strikes out on its own path in disregard of text and underlying verse, composing and explicating its own poetry."<sup>172</sup> He also claims that instrumental music should be listened to for its own aesthetic sake, liberated from any non-musical elements

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<sup>171</sup> Carl Dahlhaus, *Nineteenth-Century Music* (Berkeley and Los Angeles: University of California Press, 1969), 92.

<sup>172</sup> *Ibid.*, 143.

and “affects.”<sup>173</sup> Hanslick’s attempt to establish an appropriate aesthetics of music seems to be a formalist treatment of the same purist approach of music that Tieck had at the very end of the 18<sup>th</sup> century.

Even though scholars always connect Hanslick’s formalist approach with Kant’s aesthetic theory, there is only one reference to Kant in *On the Musically Beautiful*, at the beginning of Chapter VII, “‘Content’ and ‘Form’ in Music:” “Eminent people, mostly philosophers, have affirmed the contentlessness of music: Rousseau, Kant, Hegel, Herbart, Kahlert, etc..”<sup>174</sup> Even though such an affirmation indicates that Hanslick was aware of these authors’ theories, according to Geoffrey Payzant, “we have neither internal nor collateral evidence upon which to make a positive claim for an influence” of Kant’s writings on Hanslick’s ideas.<sup>175</sup> However, as Payzant remarks, Hanslick includes C. F. Michaelis with his work “‘Ueber den Geist der Tonkunst mit Rücksicht auf Kant’s Kritik des Ästhetischen’” in the appendix following chapter I of his book. Another proof of Hanslick’s Kantian knowledge is the initial indirect contact he had with Kant’s ideas. During his law studies at the University of Prague, Hanslick started to study the history of music and aesthetics on his own. At the recommendation of his father, who was a professional bibliographer, he started with R.G. Kiesewetter’s *History of Music* and F.G. Hand’s *Aesthetics of the Art of Music*.<sup>176</sup> Hanslick himself mentions that “these two works rendered obsolete both as to conclusions and method, struck me as heaven-sent gifts. They provided the initial basis upon which I was subsequently able to build without much difficulty and entirely on my own.”<sup>177</sup> The latter one, written by Hand in 1847, has references to Kant’s theory on music:

As Kant did not allow music to be the language of the emotions, and a means of awakening aesthetical ideas, all that was left to him, to associate with a fertility of thought, was the mathematical form made use of in amalgamating the sensations; and inasmuch as with regard to charm and the power of animating the feelings, he ranked music below poetry, so he assigned to it, from an intellectual point of view, the lowest position amongst the arts, seeing that it merely affects the sensations.<sup>178</sup>

Considering the aforementioned information, my intent in this section is to support the idea that Hanslick was indeed influenced by Kant, by showing the similarities between Kant’s and Hanslick’s aesthetic approaches. In order to do that, besides discussing Hanslick’s formalism, I will make a parallel between the ideas stated in his book *On the Musically Beautiful* and Kant’s ideas in *Critique of Judgment*. My aim is

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<sup>173</sup> Ibid.

<sup>174</sup> Hanslick, *On the Musically Beautiful*, 77.

<sup>175</sup> Ibid., xvi (Translator’s “Preface”).

<sup>176</sup> Hanslick, *Music Criticism 1846-99*, 19.

<sup>177</sup> Ibid.

<sup>178</sup> Ferdinand Hand, *Aesthetics of Musical Art or the Beautiful in Music* (London: William Reeves, 1880), 10.

also to determine the consistency of Hanslick's formalism, as reflected in his concert reviews.

### Hanslick's formalism

Hanslick's aesthetic theory presented in *On the Musically Beautiful* is constituted by two main approaches: a positive and a negative one. In the negative approach, already discussed in the Chapter I of this thesis, Hanslick argues that the primary purpose of music as an art is not to generate or to represent emotions. The positive approach presents beauty of music as residing in the musical materials themselves, and especially in their form. As Hanslick considers and aesthetically evaluates music only in relation to its form, his theory is considered to be a formalist one.

What is formalism? According to the formalist approach, the only important aspect in the appreciation and evaluation of the work of art is its form. All aspects that could be related to the work of art, like historic or cultural information, or feelings or emotions generated by the work of art, should be completely disregarded when evaluating the respective work of art. It is not a matter of denying that all kinds of non-artistic elements can exist, but of diminishing their importance in defining the work of art, as well as in establishing its aesthetic value. But the real problem that appears when defining formalism is not about what one should disregard in the formalist appreciation of the work of art, but about what exactly one should consider, meaning what is "form?"

Bohdan Dziemidok identifies four possible understandings of form: 1.) the term use to describe "the means and ways of representing and expressing" something through a work of art, as opposed to content, which describes something represented and expressed; 2.) "a certain *arrangement* of parts, a structure of elements, or a global *composition* of elements of a work of art;" 3.) the sensual qualities of a work of art that can be perceived directly by senses in the contact with a work of art, and 4.) the artistic form of a work of art, distinct from its materiality, the idea of the artwork.<sup>179</sup> Dziemidok argues that most formalists have used *form* in one of the above definitions. Even though the structural definition, the second one, seems to have the most adherents, Hanslick was not one of them. Let us have a look at how Kant and Hanslick treated "form," the most important element in their aesthetic approaches.

On the one hand, Kant was the philosopher to introduce "form" as a key concept in the aesthetic discourse and, from this perspective his theory can be considered an aesthetic of form.<sup>180</sup> It is true that Kant uses the term "form" in different ways throughout his philosophical work, but in the *Critique of Judgment* he actually defines it.<sup>181</sup> Talking about color and tone, Kant writes that they cannot "be reckoned as mere sensations, but as the formal determination of the unity of a manifold of sensations, and thus as

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<sup>179</sup> Bohdan Dziemidok, "Artistic Formalism: Its Achievements and Weaknesses," *The Journal of Aesthetics and Art Criticism*, Vol. 51, No. 2 (Spring, 1993), 186.

<sup>180</sup> Rodolphe Gasche, *The Idea of Form: Rethinking Kant's Aesthetics* (Stanford: Stanford University Press, 1973), 60.

<sup>181</sup> *Ibid.*, 63.



beauties.”<sup>182</sup> Thus “form” is “the unity of a manifold.” The beauty resides in this unity and not in the symmetry or uniformity, even though the lack of the last two mentioned could affect the aesthetic value of a work of art.<sup>183</sup> With this approach, Kant indeed seems to be the adherent of the second definition proposed by Dziemidok.

On the other hand, Hanslick was the promoter of formalism with regard to music. But Hanslick has a very different approach to the notion of “form.” Surprisingly, despite the form/content binary already established at the time, for Hanslick, “form” and “content” represent the same thing and constitute the reason for beauty in music:

When we talk about the content of a work of art, we can really only make sense if we attach a form to it. The concepts of content and form mutually determine and complement each other. Where in thought a form does not seem separable from a content, there exist in fact no independent content. But in music we see content and form, material and configuration, image and idea, fused in an obscure, inseparable unity.<sup>184</sup>

Hanslick cannot consider content and form separately: “in music there is no content as opposed to form, because music has no form other than the content.”<sup>185</sup> The theme, which represents the “ultimate nucleus” of the music, can be grasped only musically, and not graphically.<sup>186</sup> Solely from this perspective one can agree with the idea that Hanslick is using form to define the result of a sensory experience.

In Casey Haskins’ opinion, Kant’s *Critique of Judgment* was too often loosely used in justifying formalism.<sup>187</sup> In Kant’s view, the criticism of art is valuable because it does not make only an aesthetic evaluation of the work of art, but also a moral one. It is justified to criticize works of art, as they are created not only for artistic beauty, but also for the purpose of manipulating our emotions.<sup>188</sup> As works of art can “make the heart enervated, insensitive to the stern precepts of duty,” Kant considers that there is no “fellowship with what may be reckoned to belong to beauty.”<sup>189</sup> For this reason, in Kant’s theory, art is valuable for what it is, but also for its consequences. As “beauty is a symbol of the morally good,” besides an aesthetic value, arts have also a moral value.<sup>190</sup> In this context, art is not autonomous, it is not created just for its sake, as Hanslick will argue, but it also has a *moral* value.

Moreover, scholars consider that Hanslick transformed dramatically Kant’s formalist approach in evaluating music. Dziemidok makes a useful distinction between

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<sup>182</sup> Ibid.

<sup>183</sup> Ibid., 65.

<sup>184</sup> Hanslick, *On the Musically Beautiful*, 80.

<sup>185</sup> Ibid.

<sup>186</sup> Ibid., 81.

<sup>187</sup> Casey Haskins, “Kant, Autonomy, and Art for Art’s Sake,” *The Journal of Aesthetics and Art Criticism*, Vol. 48, No. 3 (Summer, 1990), 237.

<sup>188</sup> Casey Haskins, “Kant and the Autonomy of Art,” *The Journal of Aesthetics and Art Criticism*, Vol. 47, No. 1 (Winter, 1989), 50.

<sup>189</sup> Ibid.

<sup>190</sup> Ibid., 51.

artistic and aesthetic formalism. Artistic formalism is “a stance claiming that the *artistic* value of an artwork, that is, the value of an artwork as an artwork is constituted exclusively (or primarily) by the variously understood form of the work.”<sup>191</sup> In other words, any other information related to the content or the cultural, historical significance of the work of art is irrelevant for its value. The other type of formalism, the aesthetic one, considers that the *aesthetic* value of the object is “determined by its form understood as the sensually perceived overall appearance of the object or the arrangement of its parts.”<sup>192</sup> From this perspective, Dziemidok considers Kant’s formalism as being an aesthetic one. It was Hanslick who used Kantian arguments in order to develop the artistic version of formalism.<sup>193</sup>

Indeed, Hanslick’s intention is to disregard all elements that could be associated with music, but that are not inside music itself.<sup>194</sup> He emphasizes the fact that even if a listener would be able to feel what the composer felt when composing the piece, that element should not be considered when evaluating the piece: “however interesting it may be, it would be first and foremost an exclusively historical or biographical fact. Aesthetic contemplation cannot be based upon any features which are outside the artwork itself.”<sup>195</sup> The above discussion shows that, even though Hanslick was influenced by the formalist theory proposed by Kant, he developed a version of his own. But let us have a closer look at both Kant’s and Hanslick’s theories in order to reveal the similar elements between the two, as well as the development of Kant’s ideas from Hanslick’s perspective.

### *On the Musically Beautiful*

Kant makes a distinction between two types of beauty: free beauty and dependent beauty. While free beauty (*pulchritudo vaga*) “presupposes no concept of what the object should be,” dependent beauty (*pulchritudo adhaerens*) “does presuppose such a concept and, with it, an answering perfection of the object.” The free beauty, which is “self-subsisting,” can be represented by works of art that have no intention in representing features external to their own nature:

Designs *a la grecque*, foliage for framework or on wall-papers, etc., have no intrinsic meaning; they represent nothing – no object under a definite concept – and are free beauties. We may also rank in the same class what in music are called fantasias (without a theme), and, indeed, all music that is not set to words.<sup>196</sup>

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<sup>191</sup> Dziemidok, 189.

<sup>192</sup> Ibid.

<sup>193</sup> Ibid.

<sup>194</sup> Robert W. Hall, “On Hanslick’s Supposed Formalism in Music,” *The Journal of Aesthetics and Art Criticism*, Vol. 25, No. 4 (Summer 1967), 435.

<sup>195</sup> Hanslick, *On the Musically Beautiful*, 48.

<sup>196</sup> Kant, 52.

In chapter III of his book, “The Musically Beautiful”, Hanslick exposes his opinion about beauty in music. He starts by defining “the beauty of a musical composition.” As he considers, like Kant, that beauty resides in the form of music, he emphasizes the self-subsisting beauty of music:

What kind of beauty is the beauty of a musical composition? It is a specifically musical kind of beauty. By this we understand a beauty that is self contained and in no need of content from outside itself, that consists simply and solely of tones and their artistic combination.<sup>197</sup>

Hanslick specifies that music does not need anything but its own material in order to be beautiful. Thus, the “self-subsisting” quality is mentioned again: “a musical idea brought into complete manifestation in appearance is already self-subsistent beauty; it is an end in itself, and it is in no way primarily a medium or material for the representation of feelings or conceptions.”<sup>198</sup> Moreover, in order to explain the nature of the musical beauty, he uses an example similar to Kant’s about Greek design:

Music is a kind of kaleidoscope, although it manifests itself on an incomparably higher level of ideality. Music produces beautiful forms and colors in ever more elaborate diversity, gently overflowing, sharply contrasted, always coherent and yet always new, self-contained and self-fulfilled.<sup>199</sup>

Part of Hanslick’s strategy to prove his theory is to mention and criticize previous aesthetic approaches to the same topic. Thus, in order to clearly define beauty in music, he discusses the mathematical aspect, a discussion that seems to be a critique of Kant’s position. Hanslick writes: “many aestheticians consider that musical enjoyment can be adequately explained in terms of regularity and symmetry.”<sup>200</sup> Kant is no doubt one of these aestheticians, since he considers the mathematical form of music as playing the main role in the enjoyment generated by music:

Although this mathematical form is not represented by means of determinate concepts, to it alone belongs the delight which the mere reflection upon such a number of concomitant or consecutive sensations couples with this their play, as the universally valid condition of its beauty.<sup>201</sup>

Hanslick does not deny the role of mathematics in music: “mathematics provides an indispensable key for the investigation of the physical aspects of musical art,” however he considers that “it occurs in all the arts, but only in the case of music is a big

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<sup>197</sup> Hanslick, *On the Musically Beautiful*, 28.

<sup>198</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>199</sup> *Ibid.*, 29.

<sup>200</sup> *Ibid.*, 40.

<sup>201</sup> Kant, *Critique of Judgment*, 130.

fuss made about it.”<sup>202</sup> Hanslick considers that the nature of beauty in music can be best grasped by understanding “the manner in which the creative act takes place in the mind of the composer of instrumental music.”<sup>203</sup> The value and the beauty of a musical composition do not reside in its mathematical form, because “mathematics merely puts in order the rudimentary material for artistic treatment and operates secretly in the simplest relations.”<sup>204</sup>

A similar approach can be found in Hanslick’s treatment of music as language. Hanslick does not agree with the parallel that aestheticians make between music and language. Kant considers that modulation is “universal language of sensations intelligible to every man.” Also, music, the “art of tone,” is “a language of the affections, and in this way, according to the law of association, universally communicates the aesthetic ideas that are naturally combined.”<sup>205</sup> Even though Kant considers that beauty resides in form, as Hanslick does in his positive thesis, for Kant, music is a “beautiful play of sensations.” He presents the combination of melody and harmony as having the purpose of “giving an expression to the aesthetic idea” and “forming the dominant affection in the piece.” As Carl Dahlhaus remarks, even though Kant makes a distinction between the emotional effect of music and the aesthetic judgment, he does “not deny the emotion but even emphasizes it.”<sup>206</sup> This is where Hanslick takes the opportunity to state again his own belief in the negative thesis that music is not meant to express specific things: “The essential difference is that in speech the sound is only a sign, that is, a means to an end which is entirely distinct from the means, while in music the sound is an object, i.e., it appears to us as an end to itself.”<sup>207</sup>

It is interesting to observe how Hanslick uses one of Kant’s arguments in order to argue further against the possible connection between language and music. For Kant, an aesthetic judgment does not involve a *concept* of the character and internal or external possibility of the object.<sup>208</sup> Also, a judgment of taste about an object that has a determinate intrinsic purpose, and can be concept-related, could be pure only “if the judging person either had no concept of this purpose, or if he abstracted from it in making his judgment.”<sup>209</sup> In other words, one cannot purely aesthetically appreciate a work of art if it is not concept-free. This Kantian judgment seems to be the perfect argument for Hanslick to argue against program music:

All specifically musical laws will hinge upon the autonomous meaning and beauty of the tones, and all linguistic laws upon the correct adaptation of sound to the requirement of expression. The most harmful and confused views have arisen from the attempt to understand music as a kind of language: we see the practical

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<sup>202</sup> Hanslick, *On the Musically Beautiful*, 42.

<sup>203</sup> *Ibid.*, 35.

<sup>204</sup> *Ibid.*, 41.

<sup>205</sup> Kant, 129.

<sup>206</sup> Carl Dahlhaus, *Aesthetics of Music* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1983), 33.

<sup>207</sup> Hanslick, *On the Musically Beautiful*, 42.

<sup>208</sup> *Ibid.*, 66.

<sup>209</sup> *Ibid.*, 78.

consequences every day. Above all, it must seem appropriate to composers of not much creative power to regard autonomous musical beauty (which to them is inaccessible) as a false, materialistic principle and to opt for the programmatic significance of music.<sup>210</sup>

Hanslick considers that the genuine error made by the program music adherents is to accept the idea that music is similar to language and to consider that by using words, “the true heart of music, the formal beauty which gratifies in itself, would thereby be pierced through, and the chimera of ‘meaning’ pursued.”<sup>211</sup>

### Hanslick’s Reviews

The above analysis shows that, in *On the Musically Beautiful*, Hanslick agrees with important ideas in Kant’s theory of music and he uses them as a foundation for his own theory. Also, since Hanslick brings new elements and more detailed explanations, he is actually developing certain aspects of Kant’s thinking. But is Hanslick consistent throughout all his writings? As the most important part of Hanslick’s career as a music critic is constituted by his concert reviews, an examination of those ideas on music seems necessary.

Peter Kivy brings to attention a passage from a review written by Hanslick with regard to an aria from Gluck’s *Orfeo ed Euridice*. Hanslick writes: “We are indeed not quite sure that the composer is entirely absolved in this case, insofar as music certainly possesses far more specific tones for the expression of passionate grief.”<sup>212</sup> The problem that appears is the contradiction between Hanslick’s theory and his practical criticism. While in his book he argues through the negative thesis that music is not about expressing emotions, in his review he states that possibility. The same problem is discussed by Robert Wall, who finds several other reviews where Hanslick explicitly uses terms that indicate emotions that seem to be expressed by the music discussed.<sup>213</sup> Expressions like “intoxicating floral fragrance,” “spiritual and suprasensual expression,” “ethical character of music,” make the reader indeed wonder about the consistency of Hanslick’s position.

One cannot but agree with these objections when she reads in the “Beethoven’s ‘Missa Solemnis’” review: “Beethoven was inspired by the idea of faith, and in his music he gives us religion as he saw it,”<sup>214</sup> or about Brahms: “the instant he touches the keys one experiences the feeling.”<sup>215</sup> There are many remarks of this type in Hanslick’s reviews, some of them being quite elaborate:

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<sup>210</sup> Ibid., 43.

<sup>211</sup> Ibid., 44.

<sup>212</sup> Peter Kivy, “Something I’ve Always Wanted to Know about Hanslick,” in *The Journal of Aesthetics and Art Criticism*, Vol. 46, No. 3 (Spring, 1988), 414.

<sup>213</sup> Hall, 434.

<sup>214</sup> Hanslick, *Music Criticism 1846-99*, 77.

<sup>215</sup> Ibid., 86.

A few odd hints here and there of complaint or irritation are interwoven in a cantilena otherwise full of heartiness and quiet happiness; their effect is that of musical thunder clouds rather than of dangerous clouds of passion.<sup>216</sup>

Nick Zangwill makes a good distinction between *extreme* formalism, which considers that “*all* the aesthetic properties of a work of art are formal,” and *moderate* formalism, which considers that “while some aesthetic properties of a work of art are formal, others are not.”<sup>217</sup> In his view, as long as Hanslick considers himself a moderate formalist, there is no contradiction between his theory and his reviews.<sup>218</sup>

In my opinion, Hanslick can hardly be restricted to the moderate version of formalism, if we take into account that all possible emotions have to be eliminated while making an aesthetic judgment (see above). And still, is there really a contradiction in Hanslick’s views? In *On the Musically Beautiful* he writes: “since music expresses no conceptual content, it can be talked about only in dry technical definitions or with poetical fictions.”<sup>219</sup> Also, he does not deny that emotions can occur when in contact with music:

Even if we have to grant to all the arts, without exception, the power to produce effects upon the feelings, yet we do not deny that there is something specific, peculiar only to it, in the way music exercises that power. [...] The effect of tones is not only more rapid but more immediate and intensive. The other arts persuade, but music invades us. We experience this, its unique power over the spirit, at its most powerful, when we are severely agitated or depressed.<sup>220</sup>

Moreover, Hanslick uses the opportunity offered by the reviews to state the aesthetic view argued in his book. As I already showed in chapter I of this thesis, reviews of Liszt’s and Wagner’s music abound in formalist statements. Even more, many years after the publication date of his book, Hanslick wrote in his 1892 review of Richard Strauss’ “Don Juan:” “The tragedy is that most of our younger composers think in a foreign language (philosophy, poetry, painting) and then translate the thought into the mother tongue (music).”<sup>221</sup>

Hanslick’s aesthetic theory might be considered an extreme one, in my view. What makes Hanslick’s writings ideologically consistent is the fact that he carefully separated the aesthetic aspect of music from any other elements that could be connected with it. In fact, the value of Hanslick’s theory is given by the emphasis that he puts on “specifically musical” beauty, bringing pure musical elements into a new and long-needed perspective.

<sup>216</sup> Ibid., p. 102 (“Schubert’s Unfinished Symphony”)

<sup>217</sup> Nick Zangwill, “Feasible Aesthetic Formalism,” *Nouÿs*, Vol. 33, No. 4 (Dec., 1999), 612.

<sup>218</sup> Ibid., 623.

<sup>219</sup> Hanslick, *On the Musically Beautiful*, 30.

<sup>220</sup> Ibid., 50.

<sup>221</sup> Hanslick, *Music Criticism 1846-99*, 292.

## Hegel and Liszt

Even though Hegel was not part of Liszt's core readings,<sup>222</sup> the presence of Hegelian ideas in some of the most important writings of Liszt is notable. Thus, in works like *An Artist's Journey: Lettres d'un bachelier ès musique 1835-1841* and *Berlioz and His 'Harold' Symphony*, Liszt makes use of Hegel's ideas in order to promote program music. By using Hegel, Liszt did not only gain an ideological support for his so-called aesthetic theory, but he also gains an authoritative voice to rely on. The following section of this thesis will examine the context in which Liszt encountered Hegel and his aesthetics of music, as well as Liszt's own writings as influenced by Hegel.

Since Liszt was profoundly unsatisfied with his early education, he tried to balance this gap by becoming acquainted with literary and philosophical works: "I have an immense need (immense is very ambitious) to learn, to know, to deepen myself – I begin everything from the beginning. I am reading Bayle, the Bible, the history of philosophical systems..."<sup>223</sup> Thus, his interest in reading in general, and in philosophy in particular, was not necessarily related only to the goal of becoming acquainted with the musical theories in effect at the time. His interest for philosophy remained vivid throughout his life, as in 1874 he wrote:

I... feel too ignorant to understand much of Nietzsche, who dazzles me with his fine style much more than he enlightens me. I agree that this is really my fault and in no way Nietzsche's; but how can I become converted to the man created by Schopenhauer or to the man of Goethe or Rousseau, whereas I adore our *bon Dieu*, the creator, and call upon him as "Our Father" who is in Heaven?<sup>224</sup>

In this context, the presence of Hegel in Liszt's interests was justified. Not only did Liszt use and develop Hegel's ideas in his writings, but in his letters to Countess Marie d'Agoult and Princess Carolyne von Sayn-Wittgenstein (the two most important women in his life), Liszt makes numerous references to Hegel. In a letter from 1834, trying to convince Marie about his fidelity and complaining about her suspiciousness, Liszt quoted Hegel: "only one person has understood me and even he..."<sup>225</sup> Again, in 1838, Liszt wrote to Madame D'Agoult: "I am never alone, my room is invaded now by two philosophers (remember the French savant l'Allart?) who are speaking to me about Hegel and Schelling."<sup>226</sup>

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<sup>222</sup> According to Ben Arnold, some of Liszt's favorite readings are from the following authors: Dante, Goethe, Pascal, Shakespeare. See Arnold, "Liszt as Reader, Intellectual and Musician," *Analecta Lisztiana I: Liszt and His World: Proceedings of the International Liszt Conference held at Virginia Polytechnic Institute and State University 20-23 May 1993* (Stuyvesant, New York: Pendragon Press, 1998), 48.

<sup>223</sup> Arnold, 39.

<sup>224</sup> Ibid., 44.

<sup>225</sup> Franz Liszt, *Selected Letters*, translated by Adrian Williams (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1998), 26.

<sup>226</sup> *Correspondance de Liszt et de la Comtesse D'Agoult, 1833-1840* (Paris: Editions Bernard Grasset, 1933), 253 (my translation.)

Later, Liszt mentioned Hegel also in his correspondence with the Princess. In 1848, he wrote to Carolyne: “As for *Satan*, I will willingly say of him what you said about the *necessity* of Hegel.”<sup>227</sup> Much later, in 1877, discussions about Hegel persisted in Liszt’s correspondence with Carolyne. Liszt expressed his disagreement with Carolyne’s appreciation of Hegel: “You have a passion for the Great – and you reproach Hegel and Cardinal Antonelli with having not been great enough!”<sup>228</sup> It seems that Carolyne’s statement about Hegel not being great enough had a long history and followed Liszt over the years, since in 1882 he writes again:

Have you read the short poem by the Queen of Romania? It is called *Jehovah*, and eloquently depicts the torments of Ahasuerus in perpetual quest of the true God – God is eternal Becoming! This formula was previously stated by Hegel, whom at Woronince in 1847 you declared ‘not great’ – and thus fairly snookered yourself!<sup>229</sup>

Liszt’s work as a writer can be split into two main periods, from 1835-1841 and 1849-1859. These periods in Liszt life coincide with his relationships with the two aforementioned women in his life. Because of that, there was much speculation over the last century with regard to the authenticity of Liszt’s authorship. However, true or not, this situation does not change the fact that Hegel’s aesthetics played an important role in Liszt’s writings and the promoting of program music, as appeared under the signature of Liszt. Since both texts to be analyzed here – *An Artist’s Journey: Lettres d’un bachelier ès musique 1835-1841* and *Berlioz and His ‘Harold’ Symphony* – seem to be especially attached to the one woman or the other, the analysis of the authorship problem should reveal the wider context in which Liszt became acquainted with and influenced by Hegel. Thus, before analyzing the influence of Hegel’s ideas on Liszt’s thought and writings, a short consideration of the context in which these writings appeared is necessary.

### Liszt as an Author

Emile Haraszti considered that Liszt was never an author in the literal meaning of the word and that there are serious reasons to doubt the authenticity of most of Liszt’s writings. In his view, there is not much from the eight volumes of writings signed by Liszt that was actually written by Liszt.<sup>230</sup> It appears to Haraszti that the women in Liszt’s life, Countess Marie d’Agoult and Princess Carolyne von Sayn-Wittgenstein, not only influenced his writing but seem also to have written a substantial part of it. Moreover, surprisingly enough, Liszt himself seemed at times to disagree with some of the thoughts

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<sup>227</sup> Liszt, *Selected Letters*, 262.

<sup>228</sup> *Ibid.*, 812.

<sup>229</sup> *Ibid.*, 881.

<sup>230</sup> Emile Haraszti & John A. Gutman, “Franz Liszt – Author despite Himself: The History of a Mystification,” *The Musical Quarterly*, Vol. 33, No. 4 (Oct.1947), 492.



that appeared under his signature, a fact that might confirm the idea that he was not the author.

Haraszti offers arguments toward his theory. Thus, he shows that, with regard to the articles published by Liszt between 1836 and 1840 as well as his *Lettres d'un Bachelier-es-musique*, documents and sources prove that Madame D'Agoult wrote them. Liszt writes in one of his letters to the countess:

The letter of the Bachelor appeared yesterday. Legouve came to pay me a compliment. He says my style is improving every day. I believe the *Monde* will repeat the letter on Thursday. Unless I am mistaken, it should have much success. When I come to Nohant, I shall give you an order for one or two articles.<sup>231</sup>

On another occasion Liszt expressed his reserve with regard to writing: "about the four *seances* which I am supposed, but don't dare, to write, after the enormous success of the *Lettre du Bachelier*, on which everybody is complimenting me."<sup>232</sup> The situation was not entirely unknown to the public at the time. In 1838, the *Pariser Zeitung* published the information that the countess was actually the author of the *Lettres*. Even though the *Gazette musicale* denied that information, offering to show the manuscript of Liszt, no manuscript of the *Lettres* was found until Haraszti made his argument.<sup>233</sup> After Madame D'Agoult decided to publish under the name of Daniel Stern, Liszt did not publish anything for another almost ten years.<sup>234</sup> However, it should be mentioned that, according to Alan Walker, there are enough extant manuscripts of Liszt to prove his authorship for some of the writings.<sup>235</sup>

There is no doubt that Marie D'Agoult read and appreciated Hegel's thought. Besides quoting Hegel in her *Esquises morales*,<sup>236</sup> after 1840, she wrote in her *Memoirs*: "The language of Kant, Schelling, Fichte, Hegel was known to me. The depth of metaphysics, instead of scaring me, attracted me."<sup>237</sup> In this context, and also considering the correspondence between Liszt and Madame D'Agoult, one can argue that, as they both were acquainted with Hegel, it is hard to decide about the author of the Hegelian content of the *Lettres d'un bachelier ès musique*.

As regards Liszt's *Berlioz and His 'Harold' Symphony*, there is also information that discredits Liszt as an author. By the time Liszt met Princess Carolyne von Sayn-Wittgenstein, he was already publicly known as a connoisseur of Kant's and Hegel's

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<sup>231</sup> Ibid., 497.

<sup>232</sup> Ibid.

<sup>233</sup> Ibid., 494.

<sup>234</sup> Ibid., 505.

<sup>235</sup> Among them, there are several pages from "De la situation des artistes" (1835) and "Chopin" (1852). Alan Walker, *Franz Liszt* (Poitiers: Fayard, 1989), 24-25.

<sup>236</sup> Liszt, *Selected Letters*, 950 (Biographical Sketches). The quote was "I Know everything, more or less, and believe that everyone could and should know everything."

<sup>237</sup> Comtesse D'Agoult, *Mémoires, Souvenirs et Journaux* (Paris: Mercure de France, 1990), 17 (my translation).

ideas.<sup>238</sup> But Carolyne herself was also a passionate reader of authors like Hegel Fichte, Goethe and Dante.<sup>239</sup>

On the one hand, Lina Ramann, the first of Liszt's biographers, considered that this article in particular was Liszt's work:

The princess became the secretary of Liszt in the deepest meaning of the word. He dictated or indicated his thoughts as well as the thread of his ideas, or they discussed together about the topic, the princess transforming the summary of the discussion into an essay or a chapter. Everything that is pure musical was written by Liszt himself, as for example the articles on the *Harold Symphony*.<sup>240</sup>

On the other hand, in one of Carolyne's letters to Liszt, there is a special mention of the article on Harold that suggests their collaboration: "Send me a summary of what you want to say, with a few words about 'Harold' that I could develop and I will try to do with the best care what you are entrusting me."<sup>241</sup>

With such evidence, one might agree with the idea that the final form of Liszt's writings was not his. However, considering Liszt's, Marie's and Carolyne's readings and interest in Hegel, the paternity of Hegelian ideas is even more difficult to establish. As Serge Gut points out, even though Liszt might have never wrote an entire article by himself, except maybe *De la condition des artistes*, this situation was not due to Liszt's incapability of writing, but more because he was more interested in promoting the specific ideas expressed in the written materials, than in their definite form.<sup>242</sup> This idea is supported by Liszt's own words, when he wrote to Carolyne in 1872:

Allow me to regret the times out of our close collaboration for the modest journal of Brendel, our articles on Franz, Schumann, Berlioz, Chopin, Meyerbeer, our disputes on the literary exigency, etc. Fate did not permit for us to continue together this useful and honestly militant task.<sup>243</sup>

Liszt's contact with and discussions about Hegel's ideas was not limited to his women friends. As I shall show, his close friend Franz Brendel was an admirer of Hegel who used Hegel's ideas to promote the ideal that he shared with Liszt.

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<sup>238</sup> Eleanor Perényi, *Liszt. The Artist as Romantic Hero* (Boston: Little, Brown and Company, 1974), 18.

<sup>239</sup> *Ibid.*, 252.

<sup>240</sup> Gut, 282.

<sup>241</sup> *Ibid.*, 281.

<sup>242</sup> *Ibid.*, 283.

<sup>243</sup> *Ibid.*, 282.

### Liszt's Milieu and Hegel

In 1844, Brendel became editor of the *Neue Zeitschrift für Musik*, the periodical founded by Schumann in 1834. Considering his friendship with Liszt, but mostly Brendel's belief in progress in music, the *Neue Zeitschrift für Musik* became the most important publication to support Liszt's work and ideas.<sup>244</sup> Besides offering to Liszt the possibility to publish in the columns of his periodical, Brendel also organized events at which Liszt's works were played. He was also to be the most important correspondent of Liszt with regard to German musical life when Liszt was away from Weimar.<sup>245</sup> Liszt always appreciated the efforts of his friend toward their shared goal, as he wrote a short time after Brendel's death in 1868: "I owe him much, or as we say more in German: ich verdanke ihm viel. The *Neue Zeitschrift* did great service towards the cause I believe to be the good one."<sup>246</sup>

Being in a close relationship with Liszt, Brendel was acquainted with Liszt's thought and its evolution. Thus, after seeing how Liszt's ideas developed after his Weimar period towards developing poetic and musical means of expression in instrumental music, Brendel revised dramatically his most important work, the *Geschichte der Musik in Italien, Deutschland und Frankreich*.<sup>247</sup> Moreover, there are some other common aspects between the writing of Liszt and Brendel, especially those regarding the mission of the artist and the status and evolution of music at the time.

Making a reference to Nietzsche's remark about Brendel,<sup>248</sup> Carl Dahlhaus considered Brendel to have been "the most eloquent spokesman for a brand of music criticism buoyed by historiological ambitions and inspired by Hegel."<sup>249</sup> Indeed, being highly interested in and influenced by Hegel, Brendel followed Hegel's idea and wrote, "In the decades of the modern period, art no longer forms the pinnacle of consciousness at all, as we observe in the halcyon days of ancient Greece."<sup>250</sup> Furthermore, he converts Hegel's idea about the destiny of music, arguing that a valid aesthetic of music is the key to a further development of music:

Can there really be any doubt that a large proportion of our present disagreements would automatically cease immediately with the establishment, or more public familiarizing, of the aesthetic principles concerned?<sup>251</sup>

As shown in Chapter I of this thesis, the same idea was maintained by Liszt. In Liszt's view, music will become "better than poetry itself perhaps, more readily expressing everything that eludes analysis, everything that stirs in the inaccessible depths of

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<sup>244</sup> Ibid., 139.

<sup>245</sup> Ibid.

<sup>246</sup> Ibid.

<sup>247</sup> Williamson, "Progress, Modernity and the Concept of an Avant-Garde," 301.

<sup>248</sup> "The same kind of person who waxed enthusiastic over Hegel now waxes enthusiastic over Wagner; in his school one even writes in Hegelish."

<sup>249</sup> Carl Dahlhaus, *Nineteenth-Century Music*, 250.

<sup>250</sup> Ibid., 251.

<sup>251</sup> Williamson, 301.

imperishable desires and feelings for the infinite."<sup>252</sup> Let us now analyze in depth these writings by Liszt.

### Liszt's Writings and Hegel

There is no doubt that the aforementioned friends of Liszt made a significant contribution to his appropriation of Hegelian ideas. However, according to John Williamson, it would be a mistake to dismiss Hegel's influence on Liszt as being simply a contextual one. Liszt's understanding of art as a balance between ideality and reality places him well amongst the followers of the German Idealist tradition.<sup>253</sup>

In Liszt's view, as presented in *An Artist's Journey: Lettres d'un bachelier ès musique 1835-1841*, there are certain differences that the means of expression of music present, as opposed to the other arts: "The musician is also at a disadvantage compared with the painter and sculptor, in that they address themselves to a feeling of form, which is far more widespread than the intimate understanding of nature and the feeling for the infinite that are the very essence of music."<sup>254</sup> Starting with the idea that all arts are based on two principles, reality and ideality, Liszt explained why the plastic arts are more accessible to the public: "Ideality is perceptible only to cultivated minds, but the reality of the sculptor can be perceived by everyone." Since music does not imitate reality, but expresses the ideality, "having no reality, so to speak," "music remains almost entirely inaccessible to the crowd."<sup>255</sup> This distinction between reality and ideality and its appropriation for music is very similar to Hegel:

The art of music offers a contrast to that of painting in one and the same sphere as the latter. Its real element is the ideal realm as such, emotion in its formless independence of asserting itself not in externality and its reality, but purely through the external medium which disappears immediately when it is expressed and thereby cancels itself.<sup>256</sup>

When talking about the artist, Liszt defines his mission as an attempt to find the *ideal* that has to be reproduced in art: the artist "contemplates and worships the ideal that his entire being will seek to reproduce." The artist's mind is in a continuous effort to "rise to the accomplishments of those things it had conceived during the extraordinary time when eternal, unclouded beauty made itself known to him."<sup>257</sup> This reminds us of Hegel's definition of the work of art:

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<sup>252</sup> Liszt, *An Artist's Journey: Lettres d'un bachelier ès musique 1835-1841*, 202.

<sup>253</sup> Williamson, 297.

<sup>254</sup> Liszt, *An Artist's Journey: Lettres d'un bachelier ès musique 1835-1841*, 34.

<sup>255</sup> *Ibid.*, 151-157.

<sup>256</sup> Hegel, *The Philosophy of Fine Art*, Vol. 3, 20.

<sup>257</sup> Liszt, *An Artist's Journey: Lettres d'un bachelier ès musique 1835-1841*, 29.

the fundamental conception of beautiful implies that it make itself objective for the immediate vision, that is to say for the senses and sensuous perception as an external work of art, so that what is beautiful becomes only then itself through such a definite form appropriate to itself explicitly united with the beautiful and the Ideal.<sup>258</sup>

While in the "bachelor letters," Liszt only uses Hegel's general ideas to argue his theory, in *Berlioz and His 'Harold' Symphony* he takes the opportunity to praise Hegel's theory of music. Extended footnotes quoting Hegel's aesthetics are accompanied by favorable comments:

May we be permitted to quote once again from Hegel, who in his appraisal and presentation of many important points in music, was led on by that keenness of instinct, often met with in talented constitutions, which deceives them less often than sophistry does in matters which they are incapable of regarding with the same impartiality.<sup>259</sup>

Moreover, Liszt takes Hegel's side in appreciating his efforts in writing about music as a non-professional musician:

For all that Hegel is criticized for having spoken about music without possessing a wide knowledge of art, we find his judgment on the whole to the point, as though dictated by that straightforward, healthy intelligence which coincides with the general conviction.<sup>260</sup>

The idea that music expresses feelings and ideas, which was disregarded by Hanslick at the same time, is the starting point for Liszt's entire opinion on music: "feeling itself lives and breathes in music without representational shell, without the mediation of action or thought."<sup>261</sup> Music as an unmediated expression of emotion is an idea initiated by Hegel:

The unrivaled power which is thereby directly exercised by music on the soul, which is neither carried forward to the vision of reason, nor divert consciousness in isolated points of view, but is accustomed to live within the ideal range and secluded depths of pure emotion.<sup>262</sup>

Considering that "Hegel appears to foresee the stimulation which the program can give to instrumental music by increasing the number of those understanding and enjoying

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<sup>258</sup> Hegel, *The Philosophy of Fine Art*, 4.

<sup>259</sup> Liszt, "Berlioz and His 'Harold' Symphony," 862, note e.

<sup>260</sup> Ibid.

<sup>261</sup> Ibid. 849.

<sup>262</sup> Hegel, *The Philosophy of Fine Art*, 361.

it,”<sup>263</sup> Liszt proposes the idea of program as a necessary step in the evolution of music. As opposed to other musician-writers discussed in this thesis, Liszt uses extended quotes from the actual text of Hegel. Thus, Hegel’s idea that a musical amateur feels “the desire to fill out this apparently meaningless outpouring of sound and to find intellectual footholds for its progress and, in general, more ideas and a more precise content for that which penetrates the soul,”<sup>264</sup> becomes a strong argument toward the idea that the program in music could enhance the power of expression in music, and thus it would be relevant for more listeners.

In order to promote program music, Liszt converts Hegel’s discussion about the possibility of the use of language in music:

The difference between the tone-poet and the mere musician is that the former reproduces his impressions and the adventures of his soul in order to communicate them, while the latter manipulates, groups, and connects the tones according to certain established rules and, thus playfully conquering difficulties, attains at best to novel, bold, unusual, and complex combinations.<sup>265</sup>

In order to strengthen his argument, Liszt includes again, as a footnote, an extended quote from Hegel after this statement, comprising three fragments that emphasize the significant contribution of language in the musical expression.<sup>266</sup> The last fragment quoted from Hegel meant to show the disadvantages of absolute music as opposed to program music:

I have already observed that of all the arts, music possesses the greatest capacity for freeing itself, not only from any actual text, but also from the expression of any definite content, finding satisfaction in a mere self-contained successions of the combinations, modifications, contrasts, and transitions that fall within the province of purely musical. Then, however, music remains empty and meaningless, and, lacking one of the chief sides of art in general, is not yet properly to be reckoned art. Only when a spiritual content is adequately expressed in the sensual element of the sounds and their varied configurations does music rise to the level of genuine art, regardless of whether this content receives its more immediate identification expressly through words or whether it is a less definite way perceptible in the sounds and their harmonic relationships and melodic animation.

Now, going back to the source, one can find how Liszt used and converted Hegel’s argument in his own interest. The last fragment in the footnote in Liszt’s article is preceded in Hegel’s writing by:

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<sup>263</sup> Liszt, “Berlioz and His ‘Harold’ Symphony,” 859.

<sup>264</sup> *Ibid.*, 860.

<sup>265</sup> *Ibid.*, 862.

<sup>266</sup> *Ibid.*, note *e*.

The second aspect of our present inquiry is that of the distinction that obtains between the way in which the art of music lays hold of its subject-matter as contrasted with the other arts, the form, that is, in which, whether it be as an accompaniment *or* (my italics) independently of a given text, it is able to apprehend and express a particular content.<sup>267</sup>

Moreover, it is followed by:

...To make this essentially veiled life and inweaved motion ring forth through the independent texture of tones, *or* (my italics) attach itself to expressed words and ideas, and to steep such ideas in this very medium, in order to re-emphasize anew the same for feeling and sympathy, such is the difficult task assigned to the art of music.<sup>268</sup>

Thus, as already shown in the section about Hegel in Chapter II, Hegel does not say that music can be expressive unless associated with words. He argues that music is able to express content either as “independent texture of tones” or as “accompaniment.” Hegel makes a distinction between *independent* music and music as *accompaniment*, discussing both as valid artistic manifestations in music. The quote used by Liszt out of context, where the “purely musical” is described as “empty and meaningless,” refers to a musical text emptied of *any* definite content. This is about the “particular content” that music is able to express in either form, associated with words or not, and not about the lack of words or ideas, as the interpretation by Liszt leads us to understand.

Hegel does not deny the possibility of associating music with words, especially as he considers vocal music to be the best means of expression in music, but this is not a sufficient reason for him to promote the association of music with words. In his understanding, it is natural that independent music does not use language: “if music is to be nothing but music simply, it must disengage itself from this factor, which it has only borrowed elsewhere, detach itself absolutely from the definite substance of language.”<sup>269</sup>

My analysis shows that Liszt was not only interested and influenced by Hegel in his thought, but that he also used and transformed Hegel’s idea in order to achieve his own ideological goal. One should not consider Liszt’s interpretation of Hegel as a sophistic one, but merely as an effort to found a valid support for the understanding of the necessity of program music at the time. In this context, the alleged collaboration between Liszt and the two women in his life cannot be considered to be anything other than a secondary aspect of the process. There is no doubt, though, that the social context of Liszt’s life had a very important contribution to his embracing of some aspects of the Hegelian aesthetic theory on music.

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<sup>267</sup> Hegel, 357.

<sup>268</sup> *Ibid.*, 358.

<sup>269</sup> *Ibid.*, 422.

## Schopenhauer and Wagner

Arthur Schopenhauer considered that aesthetic contemplation during a musical performance offers to the audience the temporary freedom to go beyond the phenomenal world of suffering and pain.<sup>270</sup> As shown in Chapter II of this thesis, he was the first philosopher to place music on the highest level amongst the arts, but also to consider music as a means of alleviating the pain of human existence. Surprisingly enough, even though Schopenhauer published *The World as Will and Representation* in 1819, long before Hegel started his courses on aesthetics or Hanslick wrote his book, the work became known in musical circles only after Wagner read it in 1854.<sup>271</sup> Thus, even though Schopenhauer wrote in a period when idealism was in full swing, his work is associated with the second half of the century and with Wagner and his operatic work, insofar as he was “discovered” much later. Despite the great influence that Schopenhauer had on Wagner, Schopenhauer did not have a special interest in Wagner’s work. Moreover he did not even seem to value Wagner’s music. After one of the few contacts with Wagner’s music, Schopenhauer wrote: “He has more genius for poetry! I, Schopenhauer, remain faithful to Rossini et Mozart.”<sup>272</sup>

Before examining how Wagner’s thinking changed after the encounter with Schopenhauer, a short consideration of his ideas before the encounter is necessary. Even though Wagner’s ideas about music were exposed in his writings, *Art and Revolution* (1849), *The Art-Work of the Future* (1849), *Opera and Drama* (1851) and *A Communication to My Friends* (1853), his poetic work also plays an important role in revealing Wagner’s approach to music before 1854. As I will show, while some elements similar to Schopenhauer’s theory were clearly stated and argued by Wagner, others were just taking shape and were to become clear only after his encounter with the philosopher’s work.

*The Art-Work of the Future* contains the most important elements that reveal the similarities between Wagner’s ideology and what he will soon after read in Schopenhauer’s *The World as Will and Representation*. As Wagner himself declared, his own theory seemed to develop in the same direction: “I recognized to my amazement that what had gripped me about Schopenhauer’s theory had long been familiar to me in my own poetic text.”<sup>273</sup> Schopenhauer reinforced ideas that Wagner had already developed.

In *The Art-Work of the Future* Wagner praises the qualities of an artwork that combines several types of art. Music, poetry and dance complement each other in creating the music drama, which “becomes the mutual compact of the egoism of the three

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<sup>270</sup> Linda and Michael Hutcheon, “Death Drive: Eros and Thanatos in Wagner’s ‘Tristan und Isolde’” *Cambridge Opera Journal*, Vol. 11, No. 3 (Nov., 1999), 292.

<sup>271</sup> Andrew Bowie, “Music and the Rise of Aesthetics,” *The Cambridge History of Nineteenth-Century Music*, Jim Samson, ed. (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2002), 52.

<sup>272</sup> Clement Rosset, *L’Esthétique de Schopenhauer* (Paris: Presses Universitaires de France, 1969), 98 (my translation).

<sup>273</sup> Ronald Taylor, *Richard Wagner. His life, Art and Thought* (London: Paul Elek Limited, 1979), 115.



related arts.”<sup>274</sup> The work of art, as envisaged by Wagner, was supposed to have a great social impact, by effecting significant changes in the development of humanity and diminishing the suffering of existence due to social and political inappropriate system.<sup>275</sup> Thus, the idea of saving humanity through the arts, music included, was already part of Wagner’s thinking.

More specifically, Wagner identifies *Necessity* as being “the generative and formative force of human life.”<sup>276</sup> Art is “the activation of the consciousness attained by Science, the portrayal of the Life that it has learnt to know, the impress of this life’s Necessity and Truth.”<sup>277</sup> In Wagner’s view, Man can attain his best possibility of being only when “his Life is a true mirror of Nature, the *inner natural necessity*, and is no longer held in subjugation to an *outer* artificial counterfeit.”<sup>278</sup> The similarity between Wagner’s *Necessity* and Schopenhauer’s *Will* is obvious. Like in Schopenhauer’s theory, Wagner’s world is the manifestation of a force, in this case, *Necessity*. *Necessity* is inaccessible to the humans who are just a manifestation of it. Their existence reflects only an imperfect image of the Necessity. It is only through art that humans could hope to achieve a better existence, reflective of the true *Necessity*. Taking into account this theory, one can easily agree with the idea that Wagner’s thought developed independently in the same direction as Schopenhauer’s theory.

Wagner’s ideology developed also in close relation to his personal experiences with art and music in particular. Wagner was so impressed with the power of expression that music has that he decided his poetry should be accompanied by music. Thus, he became a composer, despite the apparently insufficient musical talent he manifested in his youth. In his *Autobiographical Sketch*, Wagner writes: “Beethoven’s music to *Egmont* so much inspired me, that I determined – for all the world – not to allow my now completed tragedy to leave the stocks until provided with suchlike music.”<sup>279</sup>

Such profound experiences with music grounded Wagner’s belief in the power of music, belief firmly confirmed by Schopenhauer. Not only that Wagner found his own ideas reflected in Schopenhauer’s theory, but he considered that Schopenhauer’s thought “can indeed be conceived by no one in whom it did not pre-exist.”<sup>280</sup> Let us now examine the evolution of the ideological relationship developed by Wagner with Schopenhauer’s theory.

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<sup>274</sup> Wagner on Music and Drama. *A Compendium of Richard Wagner’s Prose Work*, (New York: Da Capo Press, 1981), 124.

<sup>275</sup> Aberbach, *The Ideas of Richard Wagner*, 2003, 359.

<sup>276</sup> *Richard Wagner Prose Works*, Vol. I, “The Art-Work of the Future”, translated by William Ashton Ellis (London: Kegan Paul, Trench, Trübner & Co., Ltd., 1892), 69.

<sup>277</sup> *Ibid.*, 71.

<sup>278</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>279</sup> *Ibid.*, 5.

<sup>280</sup> Elizabeth Wendell Barry, “What Wagner Found in Schopenhauer’s Philosophy,” *The Musical Quarterly*, Vol. 11, No.1 (Jan., 1925), 129.

### 1854 - Wagner's Encounter with Schopenhauer's Ideas

Wagner's contact with Schopenhauer's work takes place in a context where, due to the significant recent political events of 1848, most musicians started to reconsider the role of their activity from a social perspective.<sup>281</sup> Moreover, when his friend, the poet Georg Herwegh, recommended Schopenhauer's work to him in 1854, Wagner himself was passing through a difficult period of his life: he had decided to temporarily stop composing, focusing more on his prose. In this context, the impact of Schopenhauer's work on Wagner was even stronger. He wrote to Liszt in December of 1854:

I have late occupied myself exclusively with a man who has come like a gift from heaven into my solitude. This is Arthur Schopenhauer, the greatest philosopher since Kant, whose thoughts, as he himself expresses it, he has thought out to the end.<sup>282</sup>

After this first revelatory reading in 1854, Wagner read again Schopenhauer's work several times, as he declares in *Mein Leben*: "For years, Schopenhauer's book was never completely out of my mind, and by the following summer I had studied it from cover to cover four times. It had radical influence on my whole life."<sup>283</sup> Moreover, two decades later, in 1878, when Wagner planned together with his wife, Cosima, a list of major readings for their son, Schopenhauer was the only philosopher included.<sup>284</sup> Also, at his last birthday party in 1882, Wagner declared that Schopenhauer, Gobineau and himself were the only authors he still read.<sup>285</sup>

Even though in his theory of art, Schopenhauer maintains an anti-idealist position and an atheistic conception about art, the essential difference between his approach of music and Kant's or Hegel's is, according to Andrew Bowie, that he embraces pessimism.<sup>286</sup> In Schopenhauer's view, "life presents itself as a continual deception" and "[is] intended and calculated to awaken the conviction that nothing at all is worth our striving, our efforts and our struggles, that all good things are vanity."<sup>287</sup> Confronted with such a painful existence, the only solution humans have is to reject and even deny the force that is the cause of all things, the Will. It is only by self-abnegation and annihilation of the will to live that the pain can be diminished.

Self-abnegation and the annihilation of the will were the two main ideas that caught Wagner's attention from the first glance. In his autobiography, he writes: "here the annihilation of the will and complete self-abnegation are represented as the only true

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<sup>281</sup> Max Paddison, "Music as Ideal: The Aesthetics of Autonomy," *The Cambridge History of Nineteenth-Century Music*, Jim Samson, ed. (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2002), 329.

<sup>282</sup> Goehr, "Schopenhauer and the Musicians: an Inquiry into the Sounds of Silence and the Limits of Philosophizing about Music," 212.

<sup>283</sup> Taylor, *Richard Wagner: His life, Art and Thought*, 124.

<sup>284</sup> Aberbach, *The Ideas of Richard Wagner*, 1988, 279.

<sup>285</sup> Taylor, 236. Joseph Arthur Comte de Gobineau (1816-1882), author of *An Essay on the Inequality of the Human Race*, believed in and promoted white supremacy.

<sup>286</sup> Bowie, "Music and the Rise of Aesthetics," 52.

<sup>287</sup> Schopenhauer, *The World as Will and Representation*, Vol. III, 382-383.

means of redemption from the constricting bonds of individuality in its dealings with the world.”<sup>288</sup> According to Clement Rosset, the pessimistic characteristic of Schopenhauer’s writings influenced and impressed Wagner more than Schopenhauer’s actual theory about music.<sup>289</sup> Wagner himself was aware of this important element of Schopenhauer’s work and of the impact it had on him. In a letter sent to Liszt shortly after the first contact with *The World as Will and Representation* in 1854, Wagner wrote:

His principal idea, the final denial of the will to live, is of terrible seriousness, but is uniquely redeeming. Of course, it did not strike me as anything new, and nobody can think such a thought if he has not already lived it. But it was this philosopher who first awakened the idea in me with such clarity. When I think back on the storms that have buffeted my heart and on its convulsive efforts to cling to some hope in life – against my own better judgment –, indeed, now these storms have swelled so often to a fury of a tempest, – have yet found a sedative which has finally helped me to sleep at night; it is sincere and heartfelt yearning for death; total unconsciousness, complete annihilation, the end of all dreams – the only ultimate redemption!<sup>290</sup>

As impressed as Wagner was by Schopenhauer’s ideas, he did not hesitate to modify and improve them, if he considered that necessary, as he wrote in 1858 in a letter addressed to Mathilde Wesendonck: “I did a lot of philosophy, and arrived at some big results supplementing and correcting my friend Schopenhauer.”<sup>291</sup> An interesting aspect of Wagner’s reception of *The World as Will and Representation*, which proves that Wagner used and adapted Schopenhauer’s ideas to his own ideological interests, is the re-consideration of absolute music.<sup>292</sup>

For Schopenhauer, extra-musical elements are not necessary, and their contribution to the “meaning” of a musical work is purely accidental. Wagner increases the importance of extra-musical elements (e.g., text) when they are associated with music. For Wagner, even though elements like language, dance or stage action are secondary and do not contribute to the work of art as an aesthetic object, they can help or they can be even necessary for the understanding of the musical message.<sup>293</sup> In his 1857 “open letter,” *On Franz Liszt’s Symphonic Poems*, Wagner writes: “on this point we are therefore in agreement, and grant that, in this human world, divine music must be given a binding—even, as we have seen, a conditioning – dimension in order that its manifestation be possible.”<sup>294</sup> However, as Dahlhaus remarks, Wagner is not departing too far from Schopenhauer’s ideas, as he makes a distinction between the “divine” nature

<sup>288</sup> Aberbach, *The Ideas of Richard Wagner*, 1988, 265.

<sup>289</sup> Rosset, ‘*L’Esthetique de Schopenhauer*, 99.

<sup>290</sup> Aberbach, *The Ideas of Richard Wagner*, 2003, 264.

<sup>291</sup> Aberbach, *The Ideas of Richard Wagner*, 1988, 152.

<sup>292</sup> Max Paddison, “Music as Ideal: the Aesthetics of Autonomy,” *The Cambridge History of Nineteenth-Century Music*, Jim Samson, ed. (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2002) 331.

<sup>293</sup> Carl Dahlhaus, *Nineteenth-Century Music*, 361.

<sup>294</sup> *Ibid.*

of music and the extra-musical elements needed in order to help the expression through music “in this human world.”<sup>295</sup> Another re-evaluation of Schopenhauer’s ideas was made by Wagner in his work *Tristan und Isolde*, which is actually the most representative musical work of Wagner’s reception of Schopenhauer’s theory.

### *Tristan und Isolde*

In the years following the first reading of Schopenhauer’s *The World as Will and Representation*, Wagner resumed his work on *Die Walküre* and *Siegfried*. The confirmation that he gained from Schopenhauer made him certain of the validity of his new theory. No doubt, the combination between music and drama was the most appropriate for music to accomplish its social and existential role of conquering the Will. What was left was to convince the others about the power of Will and the power of music.

While trying to figure the best way to do that, Wagner was also starting to develop an illicit relationship with Mathilde Wesendonk.<sup>296</sup> The forbidden love that could not find fulfillment constituted for Wagner another painful topic that needed to be expressed at the time: “Since I have never enjoyed in life the real happiness of love, I will erect to this fairest of all dreams a memorial in which that love shall drink its fill.”<sup>297</sup>

Out of the two main topics that interested Wagner at the time, unhappiness in love and denial of the Will, *Tristan und Isolde* was born, being the first of Wagner’s works to encompass his new approach to the role of music.<sup>298</sup> Later, Wagner writes in *My Life*: “It was no doubt in part the earnest frame of mind produced by Schopenhauer, now demanding some rapturous expression of its fundamental traits, which gave me the idea for *Tristan und Isolde*.”<sup>299</sup> While the irresistible passion could represent the Will, Tristan, Isolde and King Mark represented the perfect characters to mirror the relationship between Wagner, Mathilde and her husband, Otto. The renunciation, the suffering and the fulfillment of love through death illustrate the conquering of the will, the acceptance of failure in human life, having music as the perfect means to express it.<sup>300</sup>

Schopenhauer’s influence on Wagner when composing *Tristan und Isolde* is obvious throughout the whole work, For example, the work starts with the two motifs chosen by Wagner to represent desire and suffering, essential elements in Schopenhauer’s theory. Moreover, not only are the motifs heard throughout the opera, but the musical bridge between them is unsolved until the end of the opera, when the two elements are transformed and combined in death, thus following Schopenhauer’s ideas.<sup>301</sup>

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<sup>295</sup> Ibid.

<sup>296</sup> Taylor, *Richard Wagner: His life, Art and Thought*, 127.

<sup>297</sup> Ibid., 125.

<sup>298</sup> Paddison, “Music as Ideal: the Aesthetics of Autonomy,” 331.

<sup>299</sup> Aberbach, *The Ideas of Richard Wagner*, 1988, 275.

<sup>300</sup> Taylor, *Richard Wagner. His life, Art and Thought*, 137.

<sup>301</sup> Linda and Michael Hutcheon, “Death Drive: Eros and Thanatos in Wagner’s ‘Tristan und Isolde’,” 273-274.

An interesting aspect that adds to the idea that Wagner reformulated Schopenhauer's theory to adapt it to his own interests, is how Wagner interposes love as a medium between the denial of the Will and death. For Schopenhauer, "what we fear in death is the end of the individual, which it openly professes itself to be, and since the individual is a particular objectivation of the Will to live itself, its whole nature struggles against death."<sup>302</sup> Because of this, the denial of the Will and its conquest is possible only through death. For Wagner, the Will can be conquered through love, which, being forbidden, eventually fulfills itself in death. With regard to this issue, in December 1858, Wagner wrote in his letter to Mathilde:

For it is a matter of demonstrating a path of salvation recognized by none of the philosophers, particularly not by Schopenhauer, – the pathway to complete pacification of the Will through love, and to that no abstract love of mankind, but the love which actually blossoms from the soil of sexual love... It is conclusive, that I am able to use for this (as philosopher – not as poet, since as such I have my own) the terminology which Schopenhauer supplies me.<sup>303</sup>

Wagner was convinced that unhappy love can find fulfillment in death. According to Linda and Michael Hutcheon, as Schopenhauer declared that he did not understand suicidal lovers, Wagner even wrote a letter that he never sent to the philosopher, explaining the connection between death and love.<sup>304</sup>

### Beethoven

Even though Wagner read *The World as Will and Representation* for the first time in 1854, and the influence of Schopenhauer was soon manifest in his musical work, the essay on Beethoven, from 1870, is the most important piece of prose in terms of Wagner's reception of Schopenhauer's theory.<sup>305</sup> In this article, meant as a contribution to the centennial celebrations of Beethoven's birth, Wagner uses the occasion to praise Schopenhauer's theory and thus fully expose his ideas influenced by Schopenhauer. The interesting aspect in the Beethoven article is that, besides analyzing Schopenhauer's theory, Wagner uses Schopenhauer's terminology to define music and describe Beethoven's genius, also embracing an image of the relation between music and the disappointing human existence very similar to the philosopher's description.

Wagner considers that Schopenhauer "was unable to base his knowledge thereof sufficiently definitely on an understanding of the very musician whose works have first laid open to the world that deepest mystery of music: Beethoven."<sup>306</sup> The article about Beethoven is the perfect opportunity for a musician to discuss the theory that praises

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<sup>302</sup> Schopenhauer, *The World as Will and Representation*, Vol. I, 365.

<sup>303</sup> Aberbach, *The Ideas of Richard Wagner*, 1988, 151-152.

<sup>304</sup> Linda and Michael Hutcheon, 281.

<sup>305</sup> Dahlhaus, *The Idea of Absolute Music* (Chicago: The University of Chicago Press, 1989), 34.

<sup>306</sup> *Wagner on Music and Drama. A Compendium of Richard Wagner's Prose Works*, 179.

music as the *idea of the world*. Wagner emphasizes the distinction between *Will* and *knowledge*: “our consciousness has two sides: in part it is a consciousness of *one’s own self*, which is the *Will*; in part a consciousness of *other things*, and chiefly then a *visual knowledge* of the outer world, the apprehension of objects.”<sup>307</sup> This distinction is necessary in order to define Beethoven as a genius. When describing Beethoven as a deaf composer, Wagner argues that the inability to hear enabled Beethoven to become the musician “who listens to his inner harmonies undisturbed by the noise of life, who speaks from the depths to a world that has nothing more to say to him.”<sup>308</sup>

Wagner successfully illustrates Schopenhauer’s idea that “the denial of the will to live shows itself if, when that knowledge is attained, volition ends, because the particular known phenomena no longer act as motives for willing.”<sup>309</sup> As a complete artist, who has access to the objectivation of the *Will* through his art, Beethoven’s *Will* is a conquered territory:

Assuredly the inner impulses of that man’s *Will* could never, or but indistinctly, modify the manner in which he apprehended the outer world, they were too violent, and also too gentle, to cling to the phenomena upon which his glance fell only in timorous haste, and finally with the mistrust felt by one constantly dissatisfied.<sup>310</sup>

The power of knowledge and perception that Beethoven had could not be disturbed by his *Will*. This reminds one of Schopenhauer’s definition of genius:

According to the exposition of the nature of genius which has been given, it is so far contrary to nature, inasmuch as it consists in this, that the intellect, whose real destination is the service of the will, emancipates itself from this service in order to be active on its own.<sup>311</sup>

Schopenhauer praises “the unutterable depth of all music by virtue of which it floats through our consciousness as the vision of a paradise firmly believed in yet ever distant from us.”<sup>312</sup> Wagner uses this idea in describing the source of “inspiration” of the genius:

The master was by no means led thither by any aberration of aesthetical speculation, but solely by an instinct, altogether ideal, which germinated in the true domain of music. This instinct coincided, as we have shown at the outset of this latter investigation, with an effort to rescue the faith in the primitive goodness

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<sup>307</sup> *Ibid.*, 180.

<sup>308</sup> *The Critical Composer. The Musical Writings of Berlioz, Wagner, Schumann, Tchaikovsky, and others*, Kolodin, Irving, ed. (New York: Books for Libraries Press, 1969), 71.

<sup>309</sup> Schopenhauer, *The World as Will and Representation*, Vol. I, 367.

<sup>310</sup> *The Critical Composer. The Musical Writings of Berlioz, Wagner, Schumann, Tchaikovsky, and Others*, 68.

<sup>311</sup> Schopenhauer, *The World as Will and Representation*, Vol. I, 151.

<sup>312</sup> *Ibid.*, 341.

of man, or perhaps to regain it, in the face of all protests of experience that might be referred as mere delusion.<sup>313</sup>

Wagner agrees with Schopenhauer that music reveals the “*idea of the world*,” and thus the work of the artist is not the expression of a personal image of the world: “what he utters is not *his view* of the world, but rather the world itself, wherein weal and woe, grief and joy alternate.”<sup>314</sup> Wagner reiterates the idea by commenting on the Pastoral Symphony of Beethoven:

The power of shaping the incomprehensible, the never seen, the never experienced, in such wise that it becomes immediately intelligible, now grows apace. The delight in exercising this power becomes humour; all the pain of existence is shattered against the immense delight of playing with it.<sup>315</sup>

By emphasizing elements from Schopenhauer’s theory in his Beethoven article, Wagner made another declaration of faith in the theory that found in music the salvation of humanity.

Rosset identifies several consequences of Wagner’s interpretation of Schopenhauer’s theory. The most important and, at the same time, inapplicable one is that Schopenhauer came to be regarded as a theorist of romantic music.<sup>316</sup> As Dahlhaus remarks, not only did Schopenhauer did not make a case for program music, but, as shown before, he could be considered to be an aesthete of absolute music.<sup>317</sup> Moreover, according to Dahlhaus, the fact that music “represents the Will itself,” gaining access to the essence of things, it is not necessarily a positive characteristic, considering that the Will is “a blind tangled will and urge, exhausting itself in alternation between the unrest and pain of want and the boredom of achieved peace, in Dahlhaus’ words.”<sup>318</sup> All the aforementioned elements are to be considered when evaluating how Schopenhauer’s theory is reflected in Wagner’s musical and prose work. Nevertheless, these elements cannot decrease the importance and the impact of Schopenhauer’s presence in Wagner’s intellectual development.

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<sup>313</sup> *The Critical Composer. The Musical Writings of Berlioz, Wagner, Schumann, Tchaikovsky, and others*, 82.

<sup>314</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>315</sup> *Ibid.*, 72.

<sup>316</sup> Rosset, *L’Esthétique de Schopenhauer*, 99.

<sup>317</sup> Dahlhaus, *The Idea of Absolute Music*, 130.

<sup>318</sup> Carl Dahlhaus, *Esthetics of Music*, 43.

### Wagner and Nietzsche

In the musical world, there are several names that are frequently associated with that of Wagner. Besides Eduard Hanslick and Arthur Schopenhauer, Friedrich Nietzsche would be the most prominent. But there is a major difference between the relationships Wagner had with Hanslick or Schopenhauer, and the one he had with Nietzsche. While Wagner had a music-related relationship with Hanslick, and an ideological one with Schopenhauer, his music, presence and ideas had an impact on Nietzsche's life. This philosopher's work was so much influenced by Wagner that a substantial part of it is devoted more or less to the composer. Thus, besides different studies, letters, aphorisms, one can find direct or indirect references to Wagner or his ideology in major works like: *The Birth of Tragedy* (1872), *Richard Wagner in Bayreuth* (1876), *Human, All Too Human* (1878), *The Gay Science* (1882), *The Wagner Case* (1888), *Nietzsche contra Wagner* (1888), *Ecce Homo* (1888). As Nietzsche's first major published work was *The Birth of Tragedy* and the last active year of his life was 1888,<sup>319</sup> it is obvious that he was concerned with Wagner throughout his entire literary career.

In his youth, Nietzsche appreciated Wagner's music and ideals so much that he decided to promote them through his philosophical writings. After meeting the composer, Nietzsche's conviction about the genius of Wagner only grew stronger. Despite Nietzsche's later public re-evaluation of Wagner's music, which transformed and eventually destroyed their relationship, the composer never lost significance for Nietzsche. In 1888, Nietzsche wrote:

Here where I am speaking of the vivifying influences of my life, a word is necessary to express my gratitude for that which above all other things, refreshed me most profoundly and most genuinely... This was, unquestionably my intercourse with Richard Wagner. All the rest of my human relationships I treat quite lightly, but at no price would I be willing to blot from my life the Tribschen days – those days of mutual confidence, of cheerfulness, of sublime flashes – the deep moments...<sup>320</sup>

Before analyzing how Nietzsche's life and thought were dramatically changed by his encounter with Wagner, it should be mentioned that, besides Nietzsche's inclination towards Wagner's music, one of the most important elements that contributed to the development of a close relationship between Nietzsche and Wagner was their shared interest in Schopenhauer's work. After 1865, during his philological studies in Leipzig, Nietzsche came across Schopenhauer's *The World as Will and Representation* in an antiquarian shop. The impact of Schopenhauer's ideas was so strong, that he convinced all his friends of the validity of Schopenhauer's theory. Passages by Schopenhauer were

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<sup>319</sup> Having a significant history of health problems, in January 1889 Nietzsche collapsed and never recovered completely.

<sup>320</sup> *The Nietzsche-Wagner Correspondence*, Elizabeth Foerster-Nietzsche, ed. (New York: Liveright, 1921), ix.



used as suggestions to the daily problems.<sup>321</sup> Thus, by the time Nietzsche met Wagner in 1869, he was already well acquainted with and a strong admirer of Schopenhauer's approach to music, which had already influenced Wagner so much.

### The encounter with Wagner's music

Nietzsche's first acquaintance with Wagner's music took place almost ten years before he met Wagner in person. By that time, in 1860, Nietzsche founded the *Germania* society together with two other friends. The small society, intended to develop the intellectual qualities of its members, was constituted only by the three friends, Nietzsche, Gustav Krug and Wilhelm Pinder, who were supposed to submit a musical or a literary piece each month to each other. Besides, they had to subscribe to the *Neue Zeitschrift für Musik*, the only journal that frequently discussed Wagner's works and ideology from a positive perspective. As a result, the monthly contributions of the three members of *Germania* were frequently concerned with musical issues, and moreover, with discussions of Wagner's music and the relationship between music and drama.

Besides discussing Wagner-related issues, *Germania* acquired an arrangement by Hans von Bülow for piano and voice of Wagner's *Tristan und Isolde*. The piece made a strong impression on all members of *Germania* and generated numerous discussions about the status of arts and the possibility of the future art-work. Pinder expressed the idea that there is no possibility of a successful harmonization between poetry and music, thus making the art-work of the future "an unrealized ideal." Elizabeth Foerster-Nietzsche argues that, even if there is no written proof of Nietzsche's position, he mostly agreed with his other friend, Krug, who writes:

I ask why should such an ideal be unattainable? Has not Wagner, in his *Tristan und Isolde* and *Nibelung*, demonstrated his ability to put this theory into practice? Now that the close union of music and poetry has been so splendidly achieved in these works, should it not also be possible for the singer to become a genuine actor?<sup>322</sup>

Even though there is no doubt that at some points in his life Nietzsche was very impressed with *Tristan und Isolde*, Frederick R. Love remarks that while trying to decide what score *Germania* should acquire, Nietzsche seemed to be more interested in Schumann's oratorio *Das Paradies und die Peri*.<sup>323</sup> There are also some other elements that prove Nietzsche's particular interest in Schumann: a few years later, when enrolling at the university in Bonn in 1864, Nietzsche visited Schumann's grave and, upon

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<sup>321</sup> Grace Neal Dolson, "The influence of Schopenhauer upon Friedrich Nietzsche," *The Philosophical Review*, Vol. 10, No. 3 (May, 1901), 242.

<sup>322</sup> *The Nietzsche-Wagner Correspondence*, 2.

<sup>323</sup> Frederick R. Love, *Young Nietzsche and the Wagnerian Experience* (New York: AMS Press Inc., 1966), 13.

receiving the piano version of *Manfred* as a gift, he considered that as being the best gift he could receive at the time.<sup>324</sup>

It seems that only later, while attending a live performance of *Tristan und Isolde*, Nietzsche revived his interest in Wagner's music. He wrote: "I cannot preserve an attitude of cool criticism in listening to this music; every nerve of my being is set to tingling and it has been a long time since I have experienced a feeling of such sustained enjoyment as I did while listening to the latter overture."<sup>325</sup> The impression lasted for years: "I am still searching for a work of such dangerous fascination, of such sweet and terrible immortality, as *Tristan* – I have searched all the arts in vain."<sup>326</sup>

### The Encounter with Wagner Himself

In 1868, after finding out from one of his friends about the young student highly interested in his music, Wagner invited Nietzsche to visit him. At the time, Nietzsche could not hope for such a privilege, focusing only on Wagner's work and quietly admiring Wagner's unique presence from a distance at events. Twenty four years old at the time, Nietzsche writes about the meeting: "Introduced to Richard and say a few deferential words. He inquires very minutely about how I come to be so familiar with his works."<sup>327</sup> The first contact was a very successful one; Wagner was pleasantly surprised that Nietzsche, besides being interested in his music, is also an admirer of Schopenhauer:

During the course of the evening we had a long conversation about Schopenhauer, and you can imagine my unbounded joy at hearing him say, with indescribable enthusiasm, how much he owed to Schopenhauer and to hear him called the only philosopher who had recognized the real nature of music.<sup>328</sup>

Out of these common interests that revealed also common ideals, a close friendship developed. Nietzsche became the most frequent visitor at Tribschen – Wagner's residence, as well as his most ardent admirer and promoter. While Wagner found in Nietzsche a man that understood his ideology, Nietzsche found in Wagner the actual possibility of seeing his ideals and dreams realized in music. The time spent in Tribschen remained significant for Nietzsche: "What would my life have been without these three years spent within reach of Tribschen, where I made twenty-three visits. Without them, what would I have been!"<sup>329</sup> It was the same for Wagner, who saw in Nietzsche a good writer and philosopher who could efficiently help him in promoting his ideology. In June 1872, Wagner wrote to Nietzsche: "O friend! You really cause me nothing but anxiety at present and this is just because I think so much of you! Strictly

<sup>324</sup> Liebert, *Nietzsche and Music*, 31.

<sup>325</sup> *The Nietzsche-Wagner Correspondence*, 4-5.

<sup>326</sup> Taylor, *Richard Wagner. His life, Art and Thought*, 197.

<sup>327</sup> *The Nietzsche-Wagner Correspondence*, 8.

<sup>328</sup> *Ibid.*, 9.

<sup>329</sup> *Ibid.*, 112.

speaking, you are the one and only gain life has brought me so far, aside from my beloved wife.<sup>330</sup>

That Nietzsche was dedicated to Wagner and his noble cause of reviving German culture became apparent when Nietzsche published *The Birth of Tragedy*. The writing was supposed to be an analysis of Greek art as a model for the rebirth of German art. According to Nietzsche, Greek tragedy encompassed two essential elements, the Dionysian and the Apollonian. Only the synthesis of the two elements made possible the achievement of the highest ideal in art. Thus, the only chance for the revival of German art was to find again the resources to combine the two elements:

Thus then the intricate relation of the Apollonian and the Dionysian in tragedy must really be symbolised by a fraternal union of the two deities: Dionysus speaks the language of Apollo; Apollo however, finally speaks the language of Dionysus; and so the highest goal of tragedy and of art in general is attained.<sup>331</sup>

After finishing the first part of *The Birth of Tragedy* in 1871, Nietzsche found it appropriate to change the content of his writing, inserting more information about Greek tragedy and its possible reincarnation in modern German music, as a favour to his friend who was going through a rough time.<sup>332</sup> Nietzsche's argument about German music and Wagner as the genius who could make possible its reborn was greatly enjoyed by Wagner, as it constituted a reinforcement of his own theories expressed in *The Art-Work of the Future*.<sup>333</sup>

Thus, in the new context, art-works like those of Wagner, which combine drama and music, represented the solution that Nietzsche offers for the realization of the new goal:

The Apollonian influence uplifts man from his orgiastic self-annihilation, and beguiles him concerning the universality of the Dionysian process into the belief that he is seeing a detached picture of the world, for instance, *Tristan and Isolde*, and that, through music, he will be enabled to see it still more clearly and intrinsically.<sup>334</sup>

Wagner wrote to Nietzsche after receiving his book: "I have never read anything more beautiful than your book! It is simply glorious! I am writing you in great haste, as my excitement is so great at the moment that I must await the return of reason before being able to read it *carefully*."<sup>335</sup> Nietzsche's book became, along with Schopenhauer's *The World as Will and Representation*, the ideological support for the Bayreuth project.

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<sup>330</sup> Ibid., 134.

<sup>331</sup> Nietzsche, 167.

<sup>332</sup> Gerald Abraham, 'Nietzsche's Attitude to Wagner: A Fresh View,' *Music & Letters*, Vol. 13, No. 1 (Jan., 1932), 65.

<sup>333</sup> Taylor, *Richard Wagner. His life, Art and Thought*, 197.

<sup>334</sup> Nietzsche, 163-164.

<sup>335</sup> *The Nietzsche-Wagner Correspondence*, 94.

Cosima, Wagner's wife, wrote: "In the evening we read Schopenhauer aloud, in the afternoon we read *The Birth of Tragedy*."<sup>336</sup> Two years later, at the second revised edition of the book, under the title *The Birth of Tragedy or Hellenism and Pessimism*, Nietzsche wrote an epilogue where he again acclaimed Wagner and his work *Tristan und Isolde*.<sup>337</sup>

The publication of *The Birth of Tragedy* did not bring to Nietzsche only positive reviews. Besides the enthusiasm of the Wagner family, his remarkable work as a professor in Basle was suddenly eclipsed by his public intention of supporting Wagner and his ideals. His professor Friedrich Ritschl, who once considered Nietzsche his most brilliant pupil and made possible Nietzsche's meeting with Wagner, considered the book to be "absolute rubbish."<sup>338</sup> The negative impact of his work was very strong. Hanslick himself writes that:

The high priest of this cult was undoubtedly the most talented and most highly educated among the defenders of Wagner's cause, but at the same time the one with the most extreme views. When writing of his *Messiah* of whom he regarded any hint of criticism as blasphemy, Nietzsche repeats almost word for word what our religious textbooks say about Jesus Christ.<sup>339</sup>

Long after his rupture with Wagner, in *Ecce Homo* – one of his last writings–, Nietzsche admits that it was a mistake to propose Wagner's art as the salvation of German culture: "In order to be just to *The Birth of Tragedy* one will have to forget a few things. It made its effects and even exercised fascination through what was wrong with it –through its application to *Wagnerism*."<sup>340</sup>

### The Bayreuth Episode

At the same time as Nietzsche was writing *The Birth of Tragedy*, Wagner arrived at the conclusion that the only satisfactory way of having appropriate productions of his works was to build a special theatre. Thus, the Bayreuth project was born. The Bayreuth idea represented for Nietzsche his own ideal embodied through Wagner's art, his enthusiasm for this activity being also manifested in the writings intended to promote the cause, *Appeal to the German Nation* and *Richard Wagner in Bayreuth*. If in *The Birth of Tragedy* Nietzsche exposed his own ideas, with influences from Schopenhauer and Wagner, these 1873 articles not only completely adopted Wagner's ideology, but Wagner himself gave him special directions, as we shall see.

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<sup>336</sup> Ibid., 97.

<sup>337</sup> Dietrich Fischer-Dieskau, *Wagner and Nietzsche* (New York: The Seabury Press, 1976), 62.

<sup>338</sup> *The Nietzsche-Wagner Correspondence*, 122.

<sup>339</sup> Joachim Kohler, *Nietzsche and Wagner: A Lesson in Subjugation* (New Haven and London: Yale University Press, 1998), 98.

<sup>340</sup> Friedrich Nietzsche, *Ecce Homo*, translated by R. J. Hollingdale (Middlesex: Penguin Books, 1979), 78.

Due to the difficult finances of the Bayreuth project, Wagner asked Nietzsche in 1873 to write an appeal to the German Nation in order to support the Bayreuth ideal. As Nietzsche described the job, “the general sense of proclamation is to implore young and old, as far as the German language is spoken, to hasten to the nearest music-dealer’s and there deposit a sum of money.”<sup>341</sup> Wagner gave to Nietzsche detailed instructions, asking him to consider several persuasive arguments that might be successful: 1.) Significance of the undertaking and significance of the promoter of the undertaking; 2.) Disgrace of the nation for not seeing the disinterested and personal sacrifice made by the promoters of the project; 3.) Comparison with other nations, which are more receptive to national causes, etc.<sup>342</sup> The appeal was also to mention that almost four thousand German bookshops, art and music dealers can offer information about the Bayreuth project and provide lists for subscriptions. “Don’t be vexed about this, dearest friend,” concludes Wagner, “but go to work on it at once.”

Nietzsche expressed his difficulties on writing on a “vigorous popular language” while focusing on his academic activity, but, nevertheless, he wrote the appeal. Even though he respected Wagner’s instructions closely, his appeal was eventually rejected and went unused by the Bayreuth committee, due to its “pessimistic” character. Even so, this writing is relevant to Nietzsche’s continuing good intentions, as he approached his task in a very serious manner:

The Germans will only appear worthy of respect and be able to exercise a salutary influence upon other nations, when they have shown how formidable they can be, and yet will succeed in making the world forget how formidable they have been by the intense manifestation of the highest and noblest artistic and cultural forces.<sup>343</sup>

With this appeal that is addressed to the wide nation, and thus ideological but more persuasive with regard to the actual value of the Bayreuth project and his author, it is interesting to observe how Nietzsche uses the opportunity also to express his appreciation and personal contentment:

It seems inconceivable that any one could still be found who knows nothing of the splendid, courageous and indomitable struggle in which Richard Wagner has been engaged for decades – a struggle which has attracted the attention of practically every nation to an idea which in its highest form and truly triumphant perfection, is embodied in the Bayreuth art-work.<sup>344</sup>

In his *Richard Wagner in Bayreuth* written in 1873, Nietzsche again makes an explicit case for Wagner, his music and his Bayreuth project. At the same time, Nietzsche reaffirms his beliefs in the unique role of music, and moreover, music drama as envisaged

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<sup>341</sup> *The Nietzsche-Wagner Correspondence*, 183.

<sup>342</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>343</sup> *Ibid.*, 194.

<sup>344</sup> *Ibid.*, 190.

by Wagner. He explains Wagner's evolution as a composer and as a thinker. Wagner is presented as the one man who identified the negative aspects of the world and also found the solution to eradicate them: "He was the first to recognize an evil which is as widespread as civilization itself among men; language is everywhere diseased, and the burden of this terrible disease weighs heavily upon the whole of man's development."<sup>345</sup> Because humanity cannot express itself anymore, due to the decadence of language, it is only "*the voice of Wagner's art* which thus appeals to men." In Nietzsche's view, Wagner's genius and art were not an accident, since his presence and activity were necessary: "In the coming of Wagner there seems to have been a necessity which both justifies it and makes it glorious."<sup>346</sup>

Because Wagner's art was essential for humanity, Wagner was justified to use different means for exposing his art than the traditional ones. Thus, "the silent manuscripts" of his work were not enough, as Wagner was the only one able "to reveal the new style for the execution and presentation of his works, so that he might set that example which nobody else could set, and thus establish a tradition of style, not on paper, not by means of signs, but through impressions made upon the very souls of men."<sup>347</sup>

In order to promote Wagner's Bayreuth project, Nietzsche emphasized the privilege and the enjoyment of those who understood and decided to follow Wagner and his cause. This fragment is very relevant in terms of Nietzsche's own perception of his closeness to the Bayreuth ideal and belief in it:

To the few who are allowed to assist in its realization is a foretaste of coming joy, a foretaste of love in a higher sphere, through which they know themselves to be blessed, blessing and fruitful, far beyond their span of years; and which to Wagner himself is but a cloud of distress, care meditation, and grief, a fresh passionate outbreak of antagonistic elements, but all bathed in the starlight of selfless fidelity, and changed by this light into indescribable joy.<sup>348</sup>

It is interesting to observe the similarities between Nietzsche's portrayal of Wagner and Wagner's portrayal of Beethoven in the article already discussed. In the 1870 article, Wagner presented Beethoven as the genius who solved the "restless" aspects of human life through his music. Only six years later, Nietzsche describes Wagner in the same terms. Wagner wrote about Beethoven:

What could the eye of a man of the world perceive of him? Assuredly nothing but what was easily misunderstood, just as he himself misunderstood the world in his dealings with it; for to his simple great heart there was continuous contradiction

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<sup>345</sup> Friedrich Nietzsche, *The Complete Works of Friedrich Nietzsche*. Vol 4. *Thoughts Out of Season*. Part I, translated by Anthoni M. Ludovici (New York: Russell & Russell. Inc., 1964), 132-133.

<sup>346</sup> *Ibid.*, 145.

<sup>347</sup> *Ibid.*, 167.

<sup>348</sup> *Ibid.*, 171.

in the world – that he could only resolve harmoniously in the sublime fields of art.<sup>349</sup>

The same ability of the genius, to reconcile the chaotic elements of the world through his art, is described by Nietzsche:

That is why he is a simplifier of the universe; for the simplification of the universe is only possible to him whose eyes has been able to master the immensity and wildness of an apparent chaos, and to relate and unite those things which before had lain hopelessly asunder.<sup>350</sup>

The similarities in describing the genius as well as the personal hero of the cult are not accidental in Nietzsche's writing. He was aware of the *Beethoven* article and in his special foreword to *The Birth of Tragedy* for Wagner, the philosopher remarks that while he worked at his book Wagner was writing about Beethoven: "You will thus remember that it was at the same time as your magnificent dissertation on Beethoven originated, amidst the horrors and sublimities of the war which had then just broken out, that I collected myself for these thoughts."<sup>351</sup>

By the time the festival was almost fully planned, Nietzsche's health was weakening. Thus, focusing on the stage spectacle, reading or writing became extremely difficult at times. Moreover, his thinking and dictation were not as coherent as before, requiring his protégé, the composer Peter Gast, to adjust passages from *Human, All Too Human*, which was Nietzsche's work-in-progress at the time.<sup>352</sup> Moreover, after reading the libretto for Wagner's *Parsifal*, Nietzsche began to seriously doubt that Wagner's art could really accomplish the ideal in which he believed.

In Nietzsche's view, Wagner seemed to be more and more concerned about his own work and the success of the Bayreuth project, than about the realization of the ideal they once shared. Also, Wagner's tendency towards anti-Semitism and Christianity profoundly opposed Nietzsche's own approach to the world. As he will later write in *Nietzsche contra Wagner*, "Wagner had returned to Germany, he had condescended step-by-step to everything that I despise – even to anti-Semitism," and "he suddenly fell helpless and broken on his knees before the Christian cross."<sup>353</sup> As a result, after attending the Festival in 1876 only for one night, Nietzsche began to write against Wagner. They only met once after this event, which represents a turning point in Nietzsche's life and thought. In his own words:

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<sup>349</sup> *The Critical Composer. The Musical Writings of Berlioz, Wagner, Schumann, Tchaikovsky, and others*, 73.

<sup>350</sup> Nietzsche, *Thoughts Out of Season*, 131.

<sup>351</sup> Nietzsche, *The Birth of Tragedy*, 19.

<sup>352</sup> Taylor, *Richard Wagner. His life, Art and Thought*, 221.

<sup>353</sup> Friedrich Nietzsche, *The Complete Works of Friedrich Nietzsche*. Vol. 8, *The Case of Wagner*, translated by Anthoni M. Ludovici. (New York: Russell & Russell. Inc., 1964), 73.

Henceforward alone and cruelly distrustful of myself, I then took up sides – not without anger – *against myself* and for all that which hurt me and fell hard upon me and fell hard upon me: and thus I found the road to that courageous pessimism which is the opposite of all idealistic falsehood, and which, as it seems to me, is also the road to *me – to my mission...*<sup>354</sup>

After reading *Human, All Too Human* and *The Gay Science*, Wagner himself became hostile towards Nietzsche's attitude. Confronted with the unfavorable description of his music in the books, and moreover with Nietzsche's recent support of the average musician Peter Gast as a genius, Wagner exclaimed: "Nietzsche had not a single original thought in his head, no substance of his own! All the substance came from outside, put into his mind by others."<sup>355</sup>

### Re-evaluating Wagner, His Music, and His Ideas

Over the next years, Nietzsche re-evaluated his attitude towards Wagner and his works, as well as the influence of them on his work. He became convinced that he was wrong with regard to Wagner, and that actually Wagner did not represent the saving genius for German culture, but on the contrary, his work was the sign of the profound decay of German culture. The most important works where Nietzsche exposes the reasons of his sudden change in attitude towards Wagner are *The Case of Wagner* and *Nietzsche contra Wagner*.

In 1888, five years after Wagner's death, Nietzsche finished *The Case of Wagner*. In this writing, Wagner is presented as being highly responsible for the decadence of music: "Is Wagner a man at all? Is he not rather a disease? Everything he touches he contaminates. *He has made music sick.*"<sup>356</sup> Surprisingly enough, Nietzsche not only contested the ideology of Wagner, but also his music, that Nietzsche himself used to appreciate so much. "Wagner's music, not in the tender care of theatrical taste which is very tolerant, is simply bad music, perhaps the worst that has ever been composed. When a musician can no longer count up to three, he becomes "dramatic," he becomes "Wagnerian."<sup>357</sup> Nietzsche criticizes *Tanhäuser*, *Lohengrin*, and even *Tristan und Isolde*, which represented his first encounter with Wagner's music. Instead, Nietzsche declares Bizet's music to be "perfect:" "each time I heard *Carmen* it seemed to me that I was more of a philosopher, a better philosopher than other times."<sup>358</sup>

All methods used by Wagner to accomplish his ideal of the music drama were brutally criticized at this point by Nietzsche. As Wagner's "diseased" art is "concerned with hysteria, the convulsiveness of his emotions, his over-excited sensitiveness, his taste which demands ever sharper condimentation, his eracticness which he togged out to look

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<sup>354</sup> Ibid., 74.

<sup>355</sup> Taylor, *Richard Wagner. His life, Art and Thought*, 244.

<sup>356</sup> Nietzsche, *The Case of Wagner*, 11.

<sup>357</sup> Ibid., 24.

<sup>358</sup> Ibid., 1.



like principles,” the result is just “a morbid picture.”<sup>359</sup> It seems that there is nothing left from Nietzsche’s ideal embodied in Wagner’s. He even gave up Schopenhauer, considering that he had a negative influence on Wagner: “The service which Wagner owes to Schopenhauer is incalculable. It was the *philosopher of decadence* who allowed the *artist of decadence* to find himself.”<sup>360</sup>

Suddenly, all the new ideas brought by the “unmusical” Wagner in the musical realm are equivalent to abandoning laws and rules and using music just as a means: “a rhetorical medium for the stage, a medium of expression, a means of accentuating an attitude, a vehicle of suggestion and of the psychologically picturesque.”<sup>361</sup> Wagner’s ideology is reduced to three statements, representing “the quintessence” of Wagner’s writings: “Everything that Wagner cannot do is bad. Wagner could do much more than he does; but his strong principles prevent him. Everything that Wagner *can* do, no one will ever be able to do after him, and no one must ever do after him. Wagner is godly...”<sup>362</sup>

Considering the Wagner era a period of decadence, Nietzsche tries to suggest a way towards preventing such disaster to happen again. He concludes *The Case of Wagner* with three requisitions: “That the stage should not become master of the arts. That the actor should not become the corrupter of the genuine. That music should not become an art of lying.”<sup>363</sup>

Frederick R. Love argues that, as opposed to Nietzsche’s original verdict regarding the fact that Wagner’s music marks a cultural crisis, his remarks about the quality of Wagner’s music did not bring new elements. They are merely old arguments, similar to those used by Hanslick, intended as a weapon against Wagner.<sup>364</sup> According to Love, Nietzsche’s appreciation of Wagner’s music is not as much based on his musical taste and judgment, but more on the influence of his relationship with Wagner as a man, Nietzsche’s own response to Wagner’s music as well as his experiences with the public in Bayreuth.<sup>365</sup> Moreover, Love argues that even Nietzsche’s interest in *Tristan* and the *Ring* cycle or *Die Meistersinger* is based on Nietzsche’s relationship with Wagner.<sup>366</sup>

The same position is supported by Gerald Abraham, who argues that, even though Nietzsche is considered to have been a Wagnerite before the rupture with the composer, there is not enough evidence to prove that.<sup>367</sup> That Nietzsche’s musical taste and judgment were strongly affected by the context of his relationship with Wagner has already been shown. Moreover, as early as 1874, Nietzsche writes “Wagner’s youth was the aimless one of a universal dilettante... Not one of our great composers was still, at twenty-eight, as bad a musician as Wagner. This insane doubt has often crossed my mind:

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<sup>359</sup> Ibid., 13.

<sup>360</sup> Ibid., 11.

<sup>361</sup> Ibid., 23.

<sup>362</sup> Ibid., 29-30.

<sup>363</sup> Ibid., 35.

<sup>364</sup> Frederick R. Love, “Nietzsche, Music and Madness,” *Music & Letters*, Vol. 60, No. 2 (Apr., 1979), 192.

<sup>365</sup> Ibid., 193.

<sup>366</sup> Ibid., 187.

<sup>367</sup> Abraham, ‘Nietzsche’s Attitude to Wagner: A Fresh View,’ 74.

Is Wagner really musical?”<sup>368</sup> This remark was not the first critique of Nietzsche on Wagner’s musicality. In 1868, he wrote:

I have played but little as I have no piano here in Kosen, but I brought along the piano score of Wagner’s *Walküre*, in regard to which my feelings are so confused that I dare not venture an opinion on the subject. The greatest beauties and virtues are offset by equally great shortcomings and positive ugliness at times. And according to Riese and Buchbinder plus a + minus a = 0.”<sup>369</sup>

As Nietzsche’s attitude over the years towards Wagner was more related to a cultural ideal, which happened to include music as an essential element, his questionable musical taste might seem to be of insignificant importance. It is true that Nietzsche had a special relationship with music, aspiring to become a composer himself and that he cultivated his musical interests all his life, but it is also true that he encountered Schopenhauer before Wagner. By the time he met Wagner, he was already convinced about the value of music as an essential part of the ideal work of art.

In this context, meeting Wagner and his music was also meeting someone who shared his ideal influenced by Schopenhauer, and moreover, a composer who was already in the process of realizing the ideal. In this context, Nietzsche dedicated his time and work to contributing to the finalizing of the process. When he realized that the project developed by Wagner would not be able to realize the ideal, he simply stopped supporting the composer. However, his encounter with Wagner influenced not only several works, but Nietzsche’s entire attitude towards art and the possibilities of the art. Only by closely observing Wagner at work could Nietzsche realize the “decadence of music” and thus re-evaluate his entire aesthetic theory.

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<sup>368</sup> Ibid., 69.

<sup>369</sup> *The Nietzsche-Wagner Correspondence*, 4.

### **Concluding remarks**

The prior analysis was intended to show the mutual influence between music criticism and aesthetic theories about music in the 19<sup>th</sup> century. I argued that, due to the favorable social and cultural changes of the century, there originated a better communication between the realm of music and the realm of aesthetics, resulting in an exchange of ideas with regard to the nature of music, the social role of music, the “Music of the Future,” and so on. I also endeavoured to show the ideological support in the dispute between absolute music and program, as well as the evolution of the status of music within philosophical theories. As a preamble to my argument developed in the third chapter, the first two chapters of my thesis offered a survey of the extant ideas on music in both music criticism and aesthetics. The information presented in these chapters was intended to emphasize certain ideas about the nature of music as art, as well as to determine the aesthetic value of music and its place amongst the other arts. Let us now follow the course of my arguments.

The first chapter, “The Music Critic’s Perspective on Music in the 19<sup>th</sup> Century,” focused on three major names in music criticism: Eduard Hanslick, Franz Liszt, and Richard Wagner. Before analyzing the aesthetic ideas of these musicians, I surveyed the cultural context of the 19<sup>th</sup> century where my chosen authors had been active. I emphasized especially those aspects related to music, thus considering separately the activity of musicians, types of performances, the public and musical publications. Due to the changing social and political context, opportunities for musicians increased as did the number of performances and musical publications. However, the financial factor for musicians, and the class factor for the audience, still constituted impediments to the development of a complete musical life. Musical education, good taste and talent represented insufficient qualities for one looking to make a career as a musician or to access the “high-status classical music” concerts (Weber’s term).

The new freedom of the composer to have his/her own public brought more freedom in the treatment of musical material. Thus, following Beethoven’s example, classical rules for musical forms and harmony began to be broken – the written word started to be regarded as a necessary accessory for a complete work of art. In this context, Eduard Hanslick, a strong adept of absolute music, besides arguing against the program in his reviews, decided to elaborate an aesthetic theory of musical values long overdue in his opinion. My examination showed that Hanslick’s argument viewed the primary purpose of music as an art was not to generate or to represent emotions and, consequently, that the beauty of music resides in the musical materials themselves, and especially their form. As opposed to Hanslick, Franz Liszt and Richard Wagner believed in the “art-work of the future,” in which the word was a necessary element. On the one hand, even though Liszt’s writings are not as elaborate as Hanslick’s, my inquiry showed that he made a convincing case for program music, which he sees as a natural stage in the evolution of music. On the other hand, Wagner wrote extensively about the ideal work of art, which he embodies in his *Gesamtkunstwerk*.

Concomitant with the development of program in music as a value, music makes a significant leap in aesthetic theories from a simple form of entertainment to an essential element in human existence. My investigation of the most influential theories on music in the 19<sup>th</sup> century is preceded by an account of Immanuel Kant's approach to music. Kant's formalist and unfavorable definition of music is relevant not only for understanding the development of the position of music amongst the arts within a philosophical system, but also the influence it had on Hanslick's theory, which was later discussed in my third chapter.

In the second chapter, I discussed the theories of W. J. Schelling, G. W. F. Hegel, Arthur Schopenhauer, Søren Kierkegaard and Friedrich Nietzsche, emphasizing the evolution of the status of music over the decades of the century. Thus, I argued that, while for Schelling and Hegel, music is seen as a possible means to the *Absolute*, for Schopenhauer and Kierkegaard, who had a more intense contact with musical life, music becomes the most privileged amongst the arts, offering a relief from the suffering and pain caused by existence. Nietzsche, initially intending to become a composer, and eventually a music critic in his own right, drew his ideas from Schopenhauer's theory and supported the Wagnerian cause in his writings. The reasons for his later abandonment of Wagner's art were discussed at length in the third chapter.

Even though at first glance the evolution of ideas in music criticism on the one hand, and the evolution of aesthetics theory in music, on the other, do not present obvious similarities and connections, it was my task to prove some degree of interdependency. Thus, in the last chapter of this thesis, I undertook a detailed investigation of certain writings, also analyzing the context in which their authors came across the philosophical or musical works that seemed to have influenced those ideas. My examination revealed strong influences in the works of Hanslick, Liszt and Wagner from philosophical works of Kant, Hegel and Nietzsche respectively, but also a tremendous influence from Wagner on Nietzsche's entire aesthetic work with regard to music, for better or worse. Let us have a closer look at the evidence that strengthens my argument with regard to this mutual influence between musicians and philosophers.

My first investigation was that of Kant's influence on Hanslick's argument in favour of absolute music. Following an idea previously developed by Tieck, Hanslick used a Kant-inspired formalist approach to develop a theory according to which music is not originally meant to express emotions. Not only does Hanslick adopt this formalist manner in his discourse about music, but my investigation revealed that his *On the Musically Beautiful* and concert reviews closely reflect ideas inspired by Kant. Thus, in his defining of beauty in music or in discussing the relationship between mathematics and music, Hanslick adopts a similar approach and uses analogous examples (e.g. while Kant used "designs *a la grecque*" to illustrate the nature of music, for Hanslick "music is a kind of kaleidoscope"). In this context, I argued that the most important theory of the 19<sup>th</sup> century that promoted absolute music as the supreme value was based on Kant's aesthetic theory.

The next section is dedicated to the analysis of Hegel's influence on Liszt. In order to determine the source of Hegelian ideas within Liszt's thought, I made an inquiry in Liszt's social context, with an emphasis on his two women partners in life and in

writing, Marie D'Agoult and Carolyne von Sayn-Wittgenstein, as well as his friend, Franz Brendel. As shown, all of these acquaintances of Liszt had a vivid interest in Hegel's aesthetic theory, which challenged and also increased Liszt's own concern with Hegel's approach to music, according to which music is able to express feelings and ideas. *Berlioz and His 'Harold' Symphony* represents the most relevant of Liszt's writings in terms of the influence of Hegel's aesthetic theory on Liszt. My critique of Liszt's use of Hegelian ideas is reflected in the analysis of quotes from Hegel, as offered by Liszt in arguing against absolute music. Liszt disregarded the wider context in which Hegel dismissed absolute music as "empty and meaningless," thus transforming Hegel's statement into a strong point in favor of program music. Nevertheless, the importance of the presence of Hegelian ideas in Liszt's thought is not diminished by Liszt's convenient interpretation of the text, as it is not diminished by his contribution in authorship with the Countess D'Agoult or the Princess Sayn-Wittgenstein.

In the second half of the third chapter I investigated Wagner's written and musical work, as influenced by Schopenhauer on the one hand, and as influencing Nietzsche on the other. In the section dedicated to Schopenhauer's influence, I emphasized two aspects: how the contact with Schopenhauer's work changed Wagner's life and thought, and also how there were similar ideological elements present in Wagner's *The Art-Work of the Future*, which was written before Wagner encountered Schopenhauer's *The World as Will and Representation* in 1854. After he read Schopenhauer's work, I argued that Wagner gained the ideological support, which directed him to eventually develop the Bayreuth project. By this time, Wagner was personally encountered by the young Nietzsche, a great admirer of Wagner's musical work, but also an adept of Schopenhauer's ideas on music. My analysis showed that the contact with the man Wagner and his plans for developing a work of art to embody Schopenhauer's theory changed Nietzsche's life. As my investigation revealed, for a number of years Nietzsche dedicated his activities to sustain Wagner's cause, with *The Birth of Tragedy* representing a significant part of his commitment to Wagner. Shortly before the opening of the Bayreuth festival Nietzsche started to identify political and personal elements in Wagner's *Gesamtkunstwerk*, which revealed the Bayreuth project as a sign of decadence and cultural failure. In this context, Nietzsche re-evaluated his position, eventually becoming an outspoken opponent of Wagner. The impact of Wagner and his work were never forgotten, however – even long after Wagner's death, in writings like *The Case of Wagner* and *Nietzsche contra Wagner*, Nietzsche still debated both influence of Wagner upon him, as well as the failure of his major cultural project.

My investigation and critique of the aesthetic ideas of most prominent music critics and philosophers of the 19<sup>th</sup> century unveiled that authors were aware of the status of music in both its practical and theoretical aspects, and moreover that they used each other's ideas towards a common goal: a better form and status for music as art. Both philosophers and musicians gradually recognized the crucial role of music for human existence and they strengthened their ideologies by relying on each other's developing thought on music, culminating with a reunited effort to achieve the most appropriate and relevant form of expression through music as a highly significant human activity.

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