ANTHONY STORR

MUSIC AND THE MIND

'Music's the medicine of the mind'
JOHN LOGAN (1744–88)
It will never be possible to establish the origins of human music with any certainty; however, it seems probable that music developed from the prosodic exchanges between mother and infant which foster the bond between them. From this, it became a form of communication between adult human beings. As the capacity for speech and conceptual thought developed, music became less important as a way of conveying information, but retained its significance as a way of communicating feelings and cementing bonds between individuals, especially in group situations. Today, we are so accustomed to considering the response of the individual to music that we are liable to forget that, for most of its history, music has been predominantly a group activity. Music began by serving communal purposes, of which religious ritual and warfare are two examples. It has continued to be used as an accompaniment to collective activities; as an adjunct to social ceremonies and public occasions. We share these functions of music with pre-literate cultures. In our society, one cannot imagine a Coronation or a State funeral taking place in the absence of music. We know less than we would like about what musical activities went on in the past in private houses; but it is important to recall that the modern concert, in which instrumental music is performed in a public concert hall as a separate entity unaccompanied by voices and in the absence of any ceremony, was not a prominent feature of musical life in England until the late seventeenth century. Since then, music as a distinct form in its own right has continued to grow in importance. During the same period, the performer has become more sharply differentiated from the listener. The individual listener's response to music is a principal theme of this book.
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stor of many other 'projective techniques'; that is, devices by
which a subject is induced to ascribe his own thoughts and attitudes
something of someone else's. Leonardo da Vinci
loved the same technique in advising students of painting to
ululate their imaginations by looking at damp-stained walls and
zeny coloured stones. These, he said, would enable them to see
'reduce to their complete and proper forms' all manner of
scapes and human figures in action.8

can be argued that music acts in similar fashion. To some
extent, a listener's response to a particular piece of music is
erected by his subjective state of mind at the time; and some part
is experience is likely to be derived from the projection of his
emotions rather than being solely a direct consequence of the
music.

A piece of music has no verbal association or frame of reference
is simply performed for its own sake, it is not surprising that
text are sometimes different responses to it. What is more
resting is the degree of consensus. In spite of the difficulties
mentioned earlier, we can be fairly confident that listeners to great
music which is familiar to them are usually sharing a closely similar
experience.

ome writers suggest that music conveys the same meaning to
certain listeners more accurately than a verbal message; that music
may be misinterpreted or variously interpreted than
texts. The epigraph to this chapter is an extract from a letter by
Mendelssohn in which he continues:

word does not mean the same thing to one person as to another;
only the tone says the same thing, awakens the same feeling, in both
though that feeling may not be expressed in the same words.9

just speculates along similar lines. During the interval of a
concert, various members of the audience chat to him.

But what were their words, which like every human and external
word left me so indifferent, compared with the heavenly phrase of
music with which I had just been communing? I was truly like an
angel, who, fallen from the inebriating bliss of paradise, subsides

SONGS WITHOUT WORDS

into the most humdrum reality. And, just as certain creatures are the
last surviving testimony to a form of life which nature has discarded,
I wondered whether music might not be the unique example of what
might have been — if the invention of language, the formation of
words, the analysis of ideas had not intervened — the means of
communication between souls. It is like a possibility that has come to
nothing; humanity has developed along other lines, those of spoken
and written language.10

It is clear that both Proust and Mendelssohn are referring to music
within a particular Western tradition. Communication between
souls is only possible if both share the same culture and hence the
same kind of music.

However, in a different context, sounds without words can be
accurately interpreted. If two people conduct a 'conversation' by
humming, without parting their lips or using words, a good deal of
information can be conveyed, such as 'I am weary'; 'I am pleased';
or even 'I love you'. The prosodic elements of speech can operate
without the syntactic, even between adults from different cultures,
because the sounds made reflect basic human emotions and have not
been elaborated into different varieties of music. Some composers
have been particularly aware of the prosodic aspects of language.
Janáček systematically recorded the melodic curves of speech; and
what he called 'speech melodies' remained central to his method of
composition.11

It must always be remembered that emotional arousal is partly
non-specific; that emotions overlap and can change from one
feeling to another quite easily. Critics may agree that a particular
work of art is 'significant' because they find themselves moved and
interested; and are likely to agree in general terms about whether a
work is tragic, humorous, profound or superficial. But detailed,
specific descriptions of their subjective reactions may differ consid-
erably.

There is a good example in Bernstein's Harvard lectures. He
takes the opening bars of Beethoven's Piano Sonata in E flat, Op. 31,
No. 3, and asks whether we listeners are hearing what Beethoven
supposedly felt when he wrote them. Bernstein then verbalizes
what Beethoven's music makes him feel in terms of pleading
question and equivocal answer.
Please Please Please. I implore you... I’ll do anything if... Yes, but only on certain conditions.

Bernstein then asks:

But, did Beethoven feel all that, or anything like it? Did I just make up these feelings, out of my blue, or are they to some degree related to Beethoven’s feelings transferred to me through his notes? We’ll never know, we can’t phone him up; but the probability is that both are true. And if so, we have just discovered a major ambiguity—a beautiful new semantic ambiguity to add to our fast-growing list.12

Bernstein’s projections tell us more about Bernstein than about Beethoven. If I had to put words to Beethoven’s phrases, I should choose different ones. But that is unimportant. We certainly share the perception that the initial contrasting phrases of this sonata are in terms of question and answer, and recognize that Beethoven uses this pattern elsewhere. For example, Beethoven himself annotates the opening phrases of the finale of his last string quartet (p. 135 in F major) by writing ‘Muss es sein? Es muss sein! Es muss sein!’

Question followed by answer is so habitual a pattern in human existence that we hardly recognize it as such. In these two musical works, Beethoven is distilling the essence of question and answer in music without words. Although I disagree with some of what Schopenhauer writes about music, I can appreciate his reference to music as expressing ‘the inner nature, the in-itself, of every phenomenon.’

In The Jewish Bride, Rembran’s represents the deepest essential features of human love without one needing to know anything personal about the individuals portrayed. In similar fashion, Beethoven is abstracting the general features of human questioning and answering from the particular. That is why Bernstein’s interpretation in terms of a pleading interchange between individuals causes momentary unease, as he would have been the first to appreciate. Beethoven’s masterly generalization should not be interpreted in terms of purely personal needs. We are bound to bring our prejudices and feelings with us when we approach a musical work; but it is the extent to which a work transcends the personal which makes it great.

Deryck Cooke, in The Language of Music, attempted to show that within the Western tradition there is a consensus between composers as to which musical devices are used to represent particular emotions. For example, the interval of the major third commonly expresses joy; whilst the minor third is generally associated with grief. The augmented fourth, called by mediaeval theorists diabolus in musica because of its ‘flawed’ sound, is often used by composers to depict demons, hell, or other horrors. Cooke’s examples of its use include works by Mozart, Wagner, Liszt, Berlioz, Gounod, Busoni, and many others. I don’t think that anyone reading Cooke’s book could fail to be convinced that there is a good deal in what he says; but there are also so many exceptions that his views have been sharply criticized. Moreover, Cooke explicitly confines his discussion to European art music which is tonal.

The emotional effects of music are more dependent upon context, less upon purely musical devices, than Cooke allowed. Eduard Hanslick, the famous Austrian critic whom Wagner pilloried as Beckmesser in Die Meistersinger, pointed out that the melody of Gluck’s ‘Che faro senza Euridice’ might be thought rather jolly if we did not know that the aria is reflecting poignant loss. The French carol ‘Quelle est cette odeur agréable, BERGERS QUI RAVIT TOUS NOS SENS’ appears as a beautifully tender melody when sung as a carol; but the same tune serves as a rumbustious drinking song, ‘Fill every glass’, in The Beggar’s Opera. There is a point in the ‘Offertorio’ of Verdi’s Requiem at which the tenor, pleading to be granted eternal life, sings something suspiciously like ‘Au près de ma blonde’.

Most experienced listeners agree that Mozart’s String Quintet in G minor, K. 516, is a predominantly tragic masterpiece. But some people feel that the last movement expresses joy because, after its adagio introduction, the key changes to G major and the time signature to 6/8. However, the Mozart scholar, Alfred Einstein, refers to this last movement as being ‘the disconsolate major that Mozart utilizes in so many of his last works’, thus indicating that, for him at any rate, the change to the major key continues the tragedy rather than lightening it.
Deryck Cooke defined music as 'the supreme expression of universal emotions, in an entirely personal way, by the great composers'. However, it is not a direct evocation of those emotions within himself which moves the listener but rather the way in which a great composer transforms universal emotions into art.

So many musicians and critics have wrestled with the problem of the meaning of music, that some have abandoned any attempt at linking absolute music with human feelings. The 'formalists' or 'non-referentialists' consider that music is an entirely autonomous art; that works of music have no meaning outside themselves; and that the experience induced by hearing a work of music is entirely the consequence of the listener's appreciation of its structure. Hanslick attempted to maintain this position. He wrote:

Reading so many books on musical aesthetics, all of which defined the nature of music in terms of the 'feelings' it arouses, and which ascribed to music a definite expressive capability, had long excited in me both doubt and opposition. The nature of music is even harder to fix within philosophical categories than painting, since in music the decisive concepts of 'form' and 'content' are impossible of independence and separation. If one wishes to attribute a definite content to purely instrumental music - in vocal music content derives from the poem, not from the music - then one must discard the precious pearls of the musical art, in which no one can demonstrate a 'content' distinct from the 'form', nor even deduce it. On the other hand, I readily agree that it is idle to speak of absolute lack of content in instrumental music, which my opponents accuse me of having done in my treatise. How is one to distinguish scientifically in music between inspired form and empty form? I had the former in mind; my opponents accused me of the latter.

By admitting the notion of inspired form versus empty form Hanslick is, I think, partially retreating from the strictly formalist position, especially with his use of the word 'empty'. If form has to contain something, what it contains must surely have some emotional significance.

Stravinsky found himself in rather the same position when, in his conversations with Robert Craft, he was discussing his famous remark 'Music is powerless to express anything at all.' Stravinsky strongly objected to the notion that a piece of music is a transcendental idea expressed in terms of music or that there was any exact correspondence between the composer's feelings and what he set down in notes. Stravinsky did admit that 'a composer's work is the embodiment of his feelings', but emphasized that, for him, the important fact about a composition was that it was something new, 'beyond what can be called the composer's feelings'. He said that 'A new piece of music is a new reality'; and that 'music expresses itself'. Of the composer he claimed: 'All he knows or cares about is the apprehension of the contour of the form, for the form is everything. He can say nothing whatever about meanings.'

It is possible to appreciate Stravinsky's point of view without total agreement. A great deal of gushing nonsense has been written about the meaning of music; but when Stravinsky expresses his dislike of the music of Richard Strauss by calling it 'treacle' he is not referring to its form but to its expression of sentiment.

Hindemith agrees with Stravinsky in so far as he writes:

Music cannot express the composer's feelings . . . Here is what he really does: he knows by experience that certain patterns of tone-setting correspond with certain emotional reactions on the listener's part. Writing the patterns frequently and finding his observations confirmed, in anticipating the listener's reaction he believes himself to be in the same mental situation.

Hindemith does not deny that music induces emotion in the audience, but he regards the composer as a skilled manipulator who 'believes that he feels what he believes the listener feels'.

He continues:

A composer can never be absolutely sure of the emotional effect of his music on the listener when using complex material, but by experience and clever distribution of this material, moreover with frequent references to those musical progressions that evoke the uncomplicated feeling-images of sadness or gaiety in an unambigu-
In asserting that certain musical patterns correspond with certain emotional reactions, Hindemith appears to be anticipating Deryck Cooke's position. But they soon part company. For Hindemith, there is no question of the composer expressing either universal or personal emotions and conveying them to the audience. Moreover, Hindemith believes that

The reactions music evokes are not feelings, but they are the images, memories of feelings . . . Dreams, memories, musical reactions—all three are made of the same stuff.  

As we shall see in a later chapter, Schopenhauer singled out music as being more directly expressive of the true, inner nature of reality than the other arts. Hindemith's view of music is exactly the opposite. Hindemith believes that the visual arts and poetry arouse emotions directly, whereas the emotions released by music are 'not real emotions'.

Paintings, poems, sculptures, works of architecture . . . do not—contrary to music—release images of feelings; instead they speak to the real, untransformed, and unmodified feelings.  

Hindemith's account suggests that composers are confidence tricksters who skilfully manipulate audience into experiencing false emotions, rather as Hitler did with his oratory. It is true that mass audiences are easily deceived; but I doubt whether this applies to a sophisticated listener who has the opportunity of hearing a work repeatedly. Hindemith claims that music can only recall feelings which the listener has experienced before in the course of 'real life'.

Susanne K. Langer, on the other hand, considered that music can not only put us in touch with emotions which we have felt previously, but can also

present emotions and moods we have not felt, passions we did not know before. Its subject-matter is the same as that of 'self-

expression,' and its symbols may even be borrowed, upon occasion, from the realm of expressive symptoms; yet the borrowed suggestive elements are formalized, and the subject-matter 'distanced' in an artistic perspective.  

Some musicians go further than Stravinsky and Hanslick in discounting the expressive aspect of music. They claim that aesthetic judgement should be confined to questions of form and structure, expressed in technical terms, without reference to any emotions engendered by the music, which they consider irrelevant. Donald Tovey's description of the second main subject of the first movement of Haydn's 'Military' Symphony as 'one of the gayest themes in the world', or his reference to a section of Brahms's Fourth Symphony as rising 'through heroism to radiant happiness' would certainly cause raised eyebrows and exclamations of disapproval in such purists. In their view, writing about music ought to be confined to describing the composer's techniques: his use of dissonance, consonance, modulation from one key to another, changes of tempo, orchestration, and every other device. But such descriptions actually exclude the listener's experience. As Frances Berenson points out, this type of technical analysis can be made by examining the score. The critic who employs it need never hear a single note of the music.  

Although Joseph Kerman appreciates the necessity and value of musical analysis, he refers to the analysts who concentrate on musical form alone as 'myopic'.

Their dogged concentration on internal relationships within the single work of art is ultimately subversive as far as any reasonably complete view of music is concerned. Music's autonomous structure is only one of many elements that contributes to its import.  

I am the last person to dispute that technical analysis is important and valuable. Any insights which we gain into how a composer obtains his effects are helpful; although the technical language use to express such insights is more likely to be useful to embry composers and conductors than it is to listeners. Many listen appreciate musical forms and structures without being able t
clothe their insights in technical language. If they did not, I claim that music would not continue to be important to them. Appreciating musical form and structure is not a technical matter which only the trained musician is equipped to undertake. It is true that describing musical form in words requires study and that the ability to do so implies a more complete appreciation of the work involved than that available to the ordinary listener. But an untrained listener who loves music does not simply immerse himself in a sea of treacle, although some nineteenth-century music comes close to providing that experience. He is also acutely aware of repetition, change of key, and resolution, to put it at its minimum. The pleasures of the unexpected are not confined to musical theorists. For example, the listener does not have to be a trained musician to recognize that Haydn is a master of surprise.

I think we do need a new type of language to describe music. Although Tovey was unrivalled in his knowledge of the music of the classical tradition, his language is old-fashioned and possibly not technical enough for today's listeners, who are often well-informed. But it is manifestly absurd to restrict the way we talk and write about music to language which deliberately excludes any reference to what makes a musical work expressive and capable of arousing arousal. To do so is reminiscent of structuralists who write about 'the text' as if literature had nothing to do with human beings as readers or as authors.

The formalist analysts are trying to make the appreciation of music purely cerebral, whereas music is rooted in bodily rhythms and movement. The expressive aspect of music is difficult to discuss for the reasons outlined earlier, but that should not prevent us from making the attempt. I think it is possible to do justice to the views of both formalists and expressionists without distorting either.

When music was still directly tied to words, and to underlining or accompanying public ritual, there could be little argument of this kind. Disputes between formalists and expressionists only begin to be important with the rise of 'absolute' music. Music was bound to take on a life of its own when it became emancipated from other forms of expression. The rise of romantic music inevitably follows the separation of music from verbal and other associations. Music itself increasingly incorporated within its own structure the human, emotional meanings which had previously belonged to the words or public occasions which the music accompanied and enhanced. To maintain that absolute music parted company with human emotions because it began to exist in its own right is clearly untenable. The opposite would be more accurate.

Music is a temporal art. Its patterns exist in time and require duration for their development and completion. Although painting and architecture and sculpture make statements about relationships between space, objects, and colours, these relationships are static. Music more aptly represents human emotional processes because music, like life, appears to be in constant motion. The fact that musical movement is more apparent than real will be discussed later.

It can be argued that 'programme' music retains references to the external world and cannot therefore be the self-contained, isolated, and more or less perfect structure which formalists admire. But a great deal of 'programme' music is simply music for which some event, story, sound, or picture has been the trigger. Beethoven's Sixth Symphony (Op. 68 in F major) is the obvious example. If Beethoven had not headed his movements with titles, which, incidentally, he adapted from the titles given to the movements of an entirely different symphony by Knecht, we should accept the 'Pastoral' Symphony as a piece of absolute music, without worrying whether Beethoven is depicting 'By the brook side' or 'Merry gathering of country folk'. The same consideration applies to Mendelssohn's overture The Hebrides. It is interesting to know that Mendelssohn jotted down the main theme whilst in the Hebrides (Tovey alleges, probably inaccurately, that he was actually in Fingal's cave); but the piece stands on its own as a magnificent work of orchestral music which needs no title. As Jacques Barzun points out, it is not the case that when titles are used 'something alien has got into the pure stream of sound.'

Rimsky-Korsakov's popular orchestral suite Scheherazade is overtly programmatic. Every listener recognizes that the sinuous solo for violin which links the movements represents the voice of Scheherazade herself telling the stories of the thousand and one nights to the Sultan. But how many listeners can recall the titles
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illustrates how the Narrator gradually improves his appreciation of form each time a piece of music new to him is repeated.

Then, to change the course of my thoughts, rather than begin a game of cards or draughts with Albertine, I would ask her to give me a little music. I remained in bed, and she would go and sit down at the end of the room before the pianola, between the two bookcases. She chose pieces which were either quite new or which she had played to me only once or twice, for, beginning to know me better, she was aware that I liked to fix my thoughts only upon what was still obscure to me, and to be able, in the course of these successive renderings, thanks to the increasing but, alas, distorting and alien light of my intellect, to link one with another the fragmentary and interrupted lines of the structure which at first had almost been hidden in mist. She knew and, I think, understood the joy that my mind derived, at these first hearings, from this task of modelling a still shapeless nebula.40

How refreshing to read that Proust experienced joy in appreciating structure! Formalists often write about music as if understanding form was only an intellectual exercise. In fact, the form of a musical work can give us the same acute pleasure that we get from the balanced symmetry of architecture, especially when allied with the unexpected structural irregularity or decorative detail which serves to dispel monotony and reveals the individual hand of a master. If a listener comes to know a work of music well, he is responding to it as a whole. Form and content in music and body and soul in human beings are equally indivisible if either are to live.

CHAPTER V

ESCAPE FROM REALITY?

Musick, the greatest good that mortals know,
And all of heav’n we have below.

JOSEPH ADDISON

Appreciation of music and the other arts is an activity somewhat removed from our ordinary life of getting and spending. We set aside particular periods of time for it; and we often go to special places like concert halls and art galleries to find what we are looking for. In pre-literate cultures, the arts are more closely integrated with ordinary life. In Western societies, the arts tend to occupy a special niche of their own, as if they might be a luxury rather than a vital part of human life. This has made it possible for the unenlightened to argue that music and the other arts are some kind of substitute for, or escape from, ‘real’ life. It is a conclusion with which I profoundly disagree; but, since some influential psychoanalysts have put forward notions of this kind, it is worth examining their ideas, if only to refute them.

Freud himself was an extraordinarily well-read individual with a lively appreciation of literature. At school, where he was top of the class for six years running, he became familiar with the Latin and Greek classics. He learned Hebrew, English and French, and also taught himself some Italian and Spanish. Shakespeare and Goethe remained his favourite authors; but he considered Dostoevsky not far behind Shakespeare, and believed The Brothers Karamazov the greatest novel ever written. Freud himself was recognized as a literary stylist, and was given the Goethe prize for literature. He was also moved by sculpture, and to a lesser extent by painting. It is true that, in the introduction to his paper ‘The Moses of Michelangelo’, Freud acknowledged that he
Noise can be threatening to normal people. If someone is hypersensitive to noise, and unable to filter out what is irrelevant from all the different noises which constantly impinge upon him, he may be specially inclined to deal with it by trying to impose a new order on it, make sense out of it, and thus turn what was threatening into something manageable. Macnic puts it succinctly:

If there is an underlying truth in the exclamation 'this noise is driving me mad', there may be an equivalent truth in its comic inversion, 'this music is driving me sane'. The form of words suggests a dynamic relationship between sensory input and perceptual response.

I have noticed that there are considerable differences between individuals in response to auditory input. Some people cannot bear trying to conduct a conversation through background music; others apparently do not notice it, or can cut it out of their perceptual field. Many people seem to have their television sets switched on all day, irrespective of whether any conversation is going on in the same room or not. A few individuals become acutely distressed if, whilst listening to a talk on the radio, someone in the room addresses them with a comment. Such people complain that they cannot listen to two things at once, and miss the sense of what both the broadcaster and the interrupter are saying. For a moment, they are threatened with chaos.

Auditory discrimination depends on being able to filter out extraneous sounds and identify what is significant. A mother will often respond to the cry of her own infant when no one else in the room has heard it. I remember sitting at breakfast with Konrad Lorenz who suddenly rose from the table saying 'I hear the cry of a goose-baby': a sound which no one else had noticed. Sure enough, a tiny gosling was in trouble and had to be rescued.

Pinchas Noy suggests that the child who is hypersensitive to auditory stimuli may find it particularly difficult to eliminate or ignore more than a few of the incoming sounds to which he is exposed, and must therefore adopt a different strategy.

The only way out of this dilemma is an effort toward orientation in and mastery of the auditory perceptual field. The infant will have to develop an ability to concentrate his attention to directing and mastering twenty different, simultaneously recurring sound stimuli.

An extreme example of such an accomplishment is presented in the person of the prominent conductor of an orchestra, who has the extraordinary gift of simultaneously listening to the orchestra as one body and to each of the instruments separately, distinguishing each by its playing as if he concentrated on it alone.

The author admits that this hypothesis lacks experimental confirmation, but it chimes well with the idea that those who are especially threatened by disorder are those most strongly motivated to discover order.

We know that sufferers from schizophrenia are hypersensitive in that they need protection from relatives who are intrusive, smothering, or critical. They feel threatened by such negative input, and are more likely to relapse than if they find themselves surrounded by tolerant acceptance. In Chapter Two, reference was made to experiments with dichotic listening, which demonstrated that, in normal subjects, language was better perceived by the left hemisphere, music by the right. Research suggests that in people suffering from mental illness, both schizophrenia and the various forms of affective disorder, the functions of the two hemispheres are not so clearly differentiated as they are in normal people.

Since specialization of hemispheric function has developed partly to facilitate the efficient processing of incoming auditory information, whether this be speech or music, it is not surprising that some mentally ill people are hypersensitive to such information and may feel threatened by it. Modern theories of information processing postulate that, in the normal person, incoming information is rapidly scanned so that stimuli which are unwanted, inappropriate, or irrelevant are excluded from consciousness. Schizophrenics sometimes complain of being overwhelmed by stimuli, as if this filtering process was absent or inefficient.

A number of writers have suggested that creative people are hypersensitive in metaphorically lacking a sufficiently thick protective skin to shield them from the impact of the external world. There is a link between mental illness and creativity, in that the ability to think creatively, to make new links between concepts, is
more often found in families which include a member who is diagnosable as mentally ill. I am not suggesting that all creative people are mentally ill, although some of the greatest have been so, but only that unconventional thought processes of a similar kind can be demonstrated in both the mentally ill and the creative. From what has already been noted, it appears likely that the mentally ill and the creative may share a difficulty in dealing with sensory input from the external world, whether this takes the form of speech, non-verbal sounds, or emotional pressure. The mentally ill are overwhelmed by the threat of confusion and disorder. The creative meet the challenge by creating a new order in their works and thus master the threat. Robert Schumann and Hugo Wolf are examples of composers who suffered from manic-depressive illness. Although ultimately defeated by the severity of their mental disturbances, there is no doubt that their creativity was partly a product of their instability. Rachmaninov also experienced severe depression. This condition can be so extreme that it prevents production altogether, but liability to depression and the threat of its recurrence can act as a spur to creativity. Berlioz, when suffering tormenting depression and anxiety, told his father that without music he could not go on living. Tchaikovsky, who also endured severe bouts of depression, wrote "Truly, there would be reason to go mad if it were not for music." His biographer, John Warrack, thinks that he was stating nothing but the sober truth.

The creative process depends on both conscious and unconscious mental functions. We are still so influenced by Freud that many people believe that anything emanating from the unconscious must be emotional, irrational, unacceptable, and probably disreputable. In reality, this is not the case. Unconscious processes are just as much concerned with pattern and structure as they are with emotional expression.

Even the irrationality of dreams is more apparent than real. Dreams certainly exhibit incongruities, impossibilities, temporal confusion, and many other features unacceptable to the rational mind. But most dreams are stories. The scanning process which goes on in sleep matches recent events with past events and links together mental contents which share a similar feeling but which may not be related in any other way. The dream attempts to make sense out of this hotchpotch by trying to impose the order of a story-line.

As I have argued elsewhere, the human species is compelled to theorize and strive to make sense of both life and the universe. Because human behaviour is not principally governed by the in-built 'instinctive' patterns of response to stimuli which direct the behaviour of animals lower in the evolutionary order, human beings are forced to become inventive. They are compelled to try to understand the world and themselves, and, in so doing, can reach new and better adaptations. The processes by which this is achieved are both unconscious and conscious. We cannot avoid making some attempt to find coherence in the world and within ourselves; but the originally unconscious impulse which makes us do this is reinforced, refined, and given rationality by conscious reasoning.

I am sure that one of the reasons why music affects us deeply is its power to structure our auditory experience and thus to make sense out of it. Although I have been at pains to dispel the psychoanalytic view that music is an escape from reality or a regression to an infantile state, there is no doubt that music provides one path of temporary withdrawal from the hurly-burly of the external world. This is refreshing, because it permits the same kind of scanning, sorting, and rearrangement of mental contents which takes place in reverie or in sleep. There are many other ways of achieving this, from going for a solitary walk in the country to practising transcendental meditation. When we take part in music, or listen to an absorbing performance, we are temporarily protected from the input of other external stimuli. We enter a special, secluded world in which order prevails and from which the incongruous is excluded. This in itself is beneficial. It is not a regressive manoeuvre, but reader pour mieux sauter; a temporary retreat which promotes a re-ordering process within the mind, and thus aids our adaptation to the external world rather than providing an escape from it.

If music and the other arts were more closely interwoven with our daily activities, we might not need this temporary retreat so much. People of other cultures sometimes cannot understand why Europeans seem so tense. When Jung visited New Mexico he talked with an Indian chief who said:
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See how cruel the whites look. Their lips are thin, their noses sharp, their faces furrowed and distorted by folds. Their eyes have a staring expression; they are always seeking something. What are they seeking? The whites always want something; they are always uneasy and restless. We do not know what they want. We do not understand them. We think that they are mad. 25

If there appears to be an escapist element in musical participation, it is because our culture is so concerned with achievement and the pursuit of conventional success that it makes ordinary life into a tense and anxious business from which the arts are absent. Music can and should be a life-enhancing part of our day-to-day existence.

Music plays a special role in aiding the scanning and sorting process which goes on when we are asleep or simply day-dreaming. Stravinsky refers to the pleasure we gain from unorganized natural sounds, which may be considerable, but which lacks the further dimension provided by music.

But over and above this passive enjoyment, we shall discover music, music that will make us participate actively in the working of a mind that orders, gives life, and creates.26

Psychoanalysts refer to this participation as ‘projective identification’: the process by which a person imagines himself to be inside some object external to himself. Imitation is not only the sincerest form of flattery, but a way of learning. By identifying ourselves with those more gifted, we can actually improve our own capacities. Teachers of music know that ‘do it the way I do’ is often a more effective way of teaching than theoretical instruction.

Music not only brings order to muscular movement, but also promotes order within the mind. This is why John Blacking, writing in his book ‘A Commonsense View of All Music’ under the heading ‘The Power of Music’, is able to say:

The development of the senses and the education of the emotions through the arts are not merely desirable options. They are essential both for balanced action and the effective use of the intellect.27

Instead of being threatened by an overload of incoherent auditory stimuli, we learn by means of music to impose our will upon this input, to exclude the irrelevant, to pay attention to what is important, and thus to create or discover some order in the world. This is comparable with the pleasure we get from the explanatory hypotheses of science.

Because a scientific theory makes the world more comprehensible, we feel less at the world’s mercy, and more able to control events. Of course, we cannot control everything. However detailed our scientific knowledge of geology, we are still vulnerable to earthquakes. We may become auditorily sophisticated, but an unexpected, loud noise will still alarm us. However, being able to make some sense out of the world gives us confidence. Music is important in a number of different ways. This is one which is insufficiently appreciated.

Music can enable brain-damaged people to accomplish tasks which they could not master without its aid. It can also make life liveable for people who are emotionally disturbed or mentally ill. Because music is not so obviously necessary to most of us, we tend to underestimate its significance in the lives of normal people. Yet it is difficult to imagine a world without it. Even if playing music were forbidden, and every device for reproducing music destroyed, we should still have tunes running in our heads, still be using music to order our actions and make structured sense out of the world around us.
Wagner’s personality was charismatic, and so is his music. Both are predominantly Dionysian. Apollonian serenity and control are not what one looks for in Wagner. Nor are many of the pleasures associated with structure, form, and symmetry, although Wagner’s use of the leitmotif is characteristic. I do not mean to suggest that Wagner did not understand such things. He was one of the most accomplished musicians to have ever lived, and could employ any compositional device which appealed to him, including sonata form. But this is not what he was aiming at.

Charismatic individuals, such as Wagner, open the doors of our perceptions, transcend our limitations, and reveal mysteries unknown to us. Eventually, they often disappoint us, because their narcissism and self-absorption preclude engagement with them as human beings of the same order as oneself. Composers who are as gifted as Mozart and Haydn are, of course, far superior to the ordinary person; but they retain their humanity and we can relate to them as human beings. Wagner is in a different category. His contemporary admirers treated him as a god. The modern listener succumbs and becomes a disciple, or else becomes disillusioned and escapes. ‘How well he understands the soul! He rules over us with the arts of a demagogue!’ Nietzsche’s ambivalence toward Wagner is faithfully reflected in this remark from an imaginary conversation in ‘Daybreak’.

Wagner’s music either overpowers or repels because his style faithfully reflects his personality. The immense length of his later operas illustrates his disregard for the listener. He does not wish to communicate; only to convert. It need not prevent one from recognizing, and being intensely moved by, his music; but it is understandable that some listeners resent the feeling of being taken over rather than charmed or persuaded.

I think that people who are repelled by Wagner’s music might well come to appreciate its power and beauty if they realized more clearly what was disturbing them. I believe that listeners to Wagner have to allow themselves to be temporarily overwhelmed if they are fully to appreciate the music. But many people are fearful of ‘letting go’ to this extent, and consequently shy away from the intense emotional experience which Wagner offers us.

In applying personal considerations to music, I want to emphasize that the music always comes first. I call this chapter ‘The Solitary Listener’ because I am interested in the increase in purely private appreciation of music which has taken place in recent years. Solitary people who are interested in music listen to music more often than was possible before the advent of modern technology; but I am not arguing that listening to music is, or ever could be, a substitute for personal relationships. Some aspects of a composer’s personality inevitably manifest themselves in his music; but the object of listening is to get to know the music, not to get to know the composer.

Great music transcends the individual who created it. My purpose in comparing getting to know a piece of music with getting to know a person was to point out the inadequacy of approaching music only as if it were a mathematical construction, not to deny that music has an impersonal dimension.

The examples of Haydn and Wagner are deliberately chosen as extremes. Although music inevitably reflects the personality of the composer to some degree, Stravinsky was surely right when he referred to a composition as being beyond the composer’s feelings. Listening to music does bring us into indirect contact with the composer, but this meeting of minds is not closely comparable with encountering another human being or listening to a person speaking. Elements of both are present; but they do not account for the most important effects of music upon the listener.

As suggested in the last chapter, urban civilization cuts us off from our own inner lives. We have to be watchful, or we shall get run over. We are assailed by many varieties of noise, most of which are unpleasant. We cannot escape from other people, from the telephone, from having demands made upon us. We easily lose touch with the wellsprings of creative phantasy which make life worth living. Life for the ordinary man and woman must have been very different when it was predominantly rural and agricultural: when bird-song, rather than the noise of machinery, filled the ears; when the farmer could observe the changing seasons and enjoy the passage of the clouds; and when, however exhausting the toil, solitude allowed the exercise of the imagination.

Many sophisticated pursuits require intellectual concentration and detachment which would be contaminated if aesthetic con-
music not only has a positive function in organizing our muscular actions but also, less obviously, our thoughts and the words in which we express them. The balanced sentences of a prose stylist like Edward Gibbon are probably derived from the antiphonal singing of psalms. Music informs and structures day-to-day actions to a much greater extent than most people realize.

This statement is confirmed experimentally by an interesting investigation into the capacities of ordinary people to create tunes. The study confirmed the authors' hypothesis that 'any person, whether musician or not is capable of composing music such as a song verse, using the musical patterns and structures provided by his/her daily musical environment (radio, TV, singing, etc.)'.

Furthermore, the authors found that they had attained a new and different understanding of the part played by music in the daily lives of the people they studied, who varied from peasants to university students.

In a part of our experiment not included in this study we dealt in greater detail with inner musical activity; we found that most people produce music by themselves for one or two hours a day, mainly by varying what they know or by combining the known tunes according to their tastes. In addition, if we also take into account music we just hear each day as background, it becomes evident music is practically a permanent part of most people's everyday mental activity.

These findings confirm the suggestion that music plays a more important part in adaptation to life than is generally realized. They also imply that early exposure to all kinds of music should play a part in every child's education. Indeed, a study of New York children aged between two and six who had played in Alexander Blackman's Orchestra claimed that all the children who had had this opportunity were well ahead of their classmates when they entered school.

If we do not provide adequate opportunities for our children to learn and participate in music, we are depriving them of something priceless. It is important that such provision should be made as early as possible. I am entirely in favour of recent methods of teaching...
MUSIC AND THE MIND

children to play strung instruments from an early age. Not all of them will turn into competent violinists, viola players, cellists, or double-bass players; but those who do will taste the delight of playing chamber music, than which there is no greater pleasure.

Let my own case serve as an example. Music has been a vital part of my life since early childhood. Although I am not gifted as a performer, playing the piano and the viola has been very rewarding to me, if not to others. I was lucky in being sent to a school where music was taken seriously. Since my voice declined tactfully rather than 'breaking', I had the pleasure of singing treble, alto, tenor, and bass successively, both in the Chapel choir and in the choral society, which performed at least two major choral works a year. I hated school; but, entirely because the musical opportunities were so great, my existence was made tolerable. Playing in an orchestra and singing in a choir are exhilarating experiences; but playing in a string quartet is better still.

I find it unsurprising that musical education has a good effect upon studying other subjects; but this is not generally appreciated by educational planners and politicians. My guess is that future research will disclose that those who have been lucky enough to receive an adequate musical education in early life are better integrated in every way when they reach maturity; and are therefore likely to be both happier and more effective. I agree with Plato's statement that music is 'a heaven-sent ally in reducing to order and harmony any disharmony in the revolutions within us'.

Music which I voluntarily summon is not the only music which I hear internally, without external stimulus. Whenever my attention is not fully engaged, music 'runs in my head' involuntarily. Sometimes it is music which I have heard recently, but often it is not. It can be annoying. I do not understand why some music is so persistent that it is hard to rid oneself of it. For me, one such piece is a theme from Berlioz's overture Les Francais-juger, the same theme which was used as introductory music to John Freeman's series of interviews on television, Face to Face. Even writing about it is enough to ensure that it will run in my head for an hour or two.

Another reason for annoyance is being unable to identify the music. I once spent a considerable period of time vainly searching through the scores of Haydn's quartets, convinced that the tune which was preoccupying me was the slow movement of one of them. It turned out to be from his 88th Symphony, which I had not heard for a long time.

What purpose is served by music running in the head summoned and perhaps unwanted? What follows is subjective speculation, but it is unlikely that my experience is unique. If I am engaged in any occupation not requiring intense concentration, the music which comes unbidden to my mind usually has physical and emotional effects of a positive kind. It alleviates boredom, makes my movements more rhythmic, and reduces fatigue. A routine trudge can be transformed into enjoyable exercise by the march 'Non piu andrai' from The Marriage of Figaro. Music drawn from memory has many of the same effects as real music coming from the external world.

But I do not institute the process of recall. I do not determine that at that particular moment I need music, or choose what music shall come to the surface. It just happens. It is as if a beneficent deity was determined to ensure that I should not be bored and that my muscular movements should be efficiently and pleasurally co-ordinated. I conclude that music in the head is biologically adaptive.

Music running in the head may also have other functions. I have noticed – and again I would like confirmation from other sources – that when I am puzzled by the fact that one particular piece of music rather than another has spontaneously come to mind, prolonged consideration often, though not invariably, reveals the music's connection with other preoccupations. Jung once said that if one thought long enough about a dream, something almost always comes of it. The same applies to music which manifests itself out of the blue. The associations may be trivial. If I find myself humming Brahms's Wiegenlied it may be because I have been visiting a grandchild. On the other hand, identifying a tune which I cannot at first account for sometimes leads me to discover that I am more interested in, or worried by, some problem which I have been consciously neglecting.

Edward Cone of Princeton University confirms the supposition that music running in the head is evidence that music, for many of us, has become an integral part of our inner mental life, and therefore of living itself.
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If music becomes a permanent part of our mental furniture, it
must exert an influence on our lives. Educationalists and parents
expect that exposure to great literature will influence their children.
Spanning the centuries, we may say that reading Montaigne,
Samuel Johnson, and Tolstoy enriches our understanding of
reality, and therefore enlarges our capacity to enjoy life and
enhances our adaptation to it. Shakespeare, Keats, and the other
great poets reveal the inner nature of the world and sharpen our
sensibilities because their perceptions and their gift for metaphor
make it possible for us to transcend our own limited vision by
sharing theirs. We take it for granted that encounters with the great
minds of the past through literature are a vital part of education
which may enable people to live lives which are less trivial, less
circumscribed, and more imbued with meaning.

But Western society is so predominantly verbal that we fail to
recognize that music has similar effects. Participating in music,
whether as performer or listener, brings us into contact with
greatness, and leaves traces of that greatness as permanent impres­
sions. I share Plato's conviction that musical training is a potent
instrument 'because rhythm and harmony find their way into the
inward places of the soul'. I am subjectively certain that my
involvement with Bach, Beethoven, Mozart, Haydn, Sibelius,
Brahms, Bartók, Stravinsky, Wagner, and many other
great composers has not only brought me pleasure but has deepened my
appreciation of life, and I am not alone in feeling this.

The structure of autobiographies is usually determined by
descriptions of places, occupations, and events which made up the
author's life, together with accounts of the people who have
influenced him or her, whether in person or through their writings.
Only in biographies of musicians does one usually read of what
music has influenced them -- the first encounter with Bach, with
Mozart, with Schoenberg. Yet such early experiences can be crucial
in the emotional development of many people who do not become
professional musicians: they are often milestones on the journey

toward maturity which can be as important as the personal
influence of teachers.
CHAPTER VII

THE INNERMOST NATURE OF THE WORLD

Far from being a mere aid to poetry, music is certainly an independent art; in fact, it is the most powerful of all the arts, and therefore attains its ends entirely from its own resources.

ARTHUR SCHOPENHAUER

Schopenhauer is unusual amongst philosophers not only in paying a great deal of attention to the arts in general, but also in according music a special place amongst the arts. This is why it is important to consider his views on music in some detail. It is worth recalling that two great composers recorded their indebtedness to Schopenhauer. Wagner first encountered The World as Will and Representation at the age of forty-one, and from then on read and re-read Schopenhauer continually. The indexes to the two massive volumes of Cosima Wagner’s diaries give 197 references to Schopenhauer. Mahler, according to his wife, thought that Schopenhauer’s account of music was the most profound ever likely to be written. He gave a complete edition of Schopenhauer’s works to Bruno Walter as a Christmas present.

In order to understand what Schopenhauer had to say about music, a brief, partial, and necessarily inadequate outline of some of his philosophical ideas is required. Following Kant, Schopenhauer thought that human beings are pre-programmed in that they are bound to perceive objects in the external world as existing in space and time, and as being governed by causal relations. We are compelled to experience the world in this way; we cannot avoid doing so. But, since these ways of experiencing the world are rooted in the construction of the human perceptual apparatus and the human brain, the way we see objects and the relations between them may not correspond to the way those objects actually are.

We all know that there are sounds which our ears cannot hear, and colours which our eyes cannot see, but which can be perceived by other species or by special instruments. Dogs can respond to tones of very high frequency which the human ear cannot hear; infra-red cameras can ‘see’ objects which the human eye cannot. The limitations of our perceptual apparatus restrict our apperception of the world; the limitations of our cerebral apparatus restrict the ways in which we can think about it. The world may not only be stranger than we think it is, but stranger than we can possibly imagine.

But Schopenhauer goes further than this. Even if our ingenuity enlarges our perceptual grasp, by inventing special techniques which enable us to incorporate the sounds we cannot hear and the sights we cannot see into our incomplete picture of external reality, we can never transcend the limitations imposed by our concepts of space, time, and causality. Schopenhauer therefore concluded that we could never perceive objects as noumena or ‘things-in-themselves’, as Kant called them. All we can do is register the ways in which they appear to us; that is, their ‘representations’ as phenomena in the external world.

But, if this is true, it must follow, as a correlative concept, that ‘things-in-themselves’ exist, and that they have their being in an underlying reality to which our categories of space, time and causality do not apply. For it makes no sense to say that our perceptions are subjective or partial unless there is a reality which is supposedly objective and complete, even if we have no access to it.

However, the underlying reality postulated must be one in which objects are not differentiated: in other words, a unity. For abolishing the categories of space, time and causality necessarily makes it impossible to distinguish one object from another. Hence Schopenhauer’s vision is that ultimate reality is a unity – the numm mundus of mediaval philosophy, which is both beyond our human categories of space, time and causality and also beyond the Cartesian division into physical and mental.

Both Kant and Schopenhauer thought that this underlying reality was inaccessible. However, according to Schopenhauer, one type
of experience brings us closer to the underlying noumenon than any other. He suggested that we have a direct knowledge from inside our own bodies which is unlike the perception we have of anything else. Of course, our bodies, like other objects in the material world, are perceived by others, and can be partly perceived by ourselves in the same way as we perceive other objects, with all the limitations which this implies. A man can look at his own right hand exactly as he looks at anyone else’s right hand. But, in addition, Schopenhauer claims that we have this private, subjective, knowledge of our own physical being and its movements. The distinguished British philosopher, David Pears, writes,

At the basis of Schopenhauer’s system there is a thesis in speculative metaphysics: we do have a resource which allows us to discern the nature of the reality behind the phenomenal world; we have our experience of our own agency. According to Schopenhauer, when we act, our knowledge of our own agency is neither scientific nor the result of any other kind of discursive operation of the intellect. It is direct, intuitive, inside knowledge of our own strivings, and he believed that it gives us our only glimpse of the true nature of reality.1

In Schopenhauer’s scheme of things, this inner knowledge is the nearest we get to perception of the Will, the driving force or energy underlying everything of which individuals are but manifestations. For, in his view, bodily movements are the phenomenal expression of that irrational, inexplicable, underlying striving toward existence which he called the Will, but which he might equally well have called Energy or Force. Nietzsche’s Will to Power is a derivative of Schopenhauer’s notion. It is important to realize that Schopenhauer’s Will (and Nietzsche’s) include the impersonal as well as the personal; that is, the Will refers to cosmic energy, the force that moves the planets or forms the stars, as well as to the energy which activates human beings. Schopenhauer himself referred to Will as ‘endless striving’, and also as ‘the thing-in-itself proper’.4 Schopenhauer regarded the Will with deep pessimism, whilst Nietzsche took a neutral view of the Will to Power.

In an interesting passage, Schopenhauer states that, if we proceed along the path of objective knowledge, we shall never get beyond the representation, i.e., the phenomenon. We shall therefore remain at the outside of things; we shall never be able to penetrate into their inner nature, and investigate what they are in themselves, in other words, what they may be by themselves. So far I agree with Kant. But now, as the counterpoise to this truth, I have stressed that other truth that we are not merely the knowing subject, but that we ourselves are also among those realities or entities we require to know, that we ourselves are the thing-in-itself. Consequently, a way from within stands open to us to that real inner nature of things to which we cannot penetrate from without. It is, so to speak, a subterranean passage, a secret alliance, which, as if by treachery, places us all at once in the fortress that could not be taken by attack from without.5

It is fair to say that Schopenhauer qualifies this statement by affirming that even this inner knowledge and approach to ‘the thing-in-itself’ is necessarily incomplete. Schopenhauer is not saying that the special knowledge which comes to us from awareness of our bodies from inside is direct knowledge of the Will itself; for all knowledge must itself exist in the phenomenal world. The very concept of knowledge requires a dichotomy between the thing which is known and the knower; and such dichotomies, as we have seen, cannot exist in the underlying unity, in which all opposites have disappeared.

But he is claiming that this special, inside knowledge of the inner strivings which manifest themselves in our physical movements, together with our vaguer intuitions of the unconscious drives which motivate us, give us pointers or hints about the nature of the underlying reality to which we have no direct access. This is the point at which the phenomenon is closest to the noumenon.

In his exposition of Schopenhauer’s doctrine, Patrick Gardiner writes:

What I am aware of in self-consciousness is not, it is true, something separate from what I am aware of when I look at my body and observe its movements, if by this it is implied that I have to do with two different entities or with two different sets of occurrences. The point is, however, that when I am conscious of myself as will I am not conscious of myself as an object. I am only conscious of myself
For example, I see, but my eye cannot see itself, unless I am looking in a mirror. This is Will in action. Schopenhauer states that 'the action of the body is nothing but the act of will objectified. . . . Every true, genuine, immediate act of the will is also at once and directly a manifest act of the body . . . .'

We are not usually conscious of our inner sense of striving as manifested in bodily movements except under special circumstances when we plan some action which is not habitual, as when we are learning to ride a bicycle or play a musical instrument. In the ordinary way, we just move in accordance with some prior intention which may or may not be consciously perceived, and then evaluate the move we have executed according to its results. If this was not the case, we might find ourselves in rather the same quandary as the centipede who found himself immobilized because he had been asked to indicate which leg followed which when he was walking. The Will may be operative in physical actions, as Schopenhauer alleges, but, whenever we become conscious of the body's operation, we are regarding it in the same way that we regard other objects. However, it is certainly true that my own body occupies a special niche in my experience of the world, even if I am only intermittently aware of its operations.

Schopenhauer thought that men's actions were far less governed by premeditation and deliberate planning than they believed. Very commonly, men act in accordance with their inner strivings without realizing what those strivings are, and then attempt to justify them afterwards. Anticipating Freud, Schopenhauer noted that we are frequently unaware of our true motives, and may only become conscious of what we were aiming at (or what the Will was aiming at) after we have acted and noted the results of our actions.

Jung, who read Schopenhauer in adolescence and who admitted being deeply influenced by him, begins his autobiography by writing, 'My life is a story of the self-realisation of the unconscious.' This initial sentence expresses Schopenhauer's idea in different words. The individual is one possible manifestation of an underlying force which is always seeking to realize itself in the

world of phenomena, but which is antecedent to all phenomena. Each bloom on a rose tree may be slightly different; but each is an expression of whatever inner force makes rose trees grow, flourish, and put forth blooms. Neither Schopenhauer's term, the Will, nor Jung's term, the Unconscious, are satisfactory; but it is hard to think of anything better. Like Nietzsche, Jung believed that there was only one fundamental striving: the striving after one's own being.

In his visionary Septem Sermones ad Mortuos, written in 1916, when he was going through a period of personal turmoil, Jung refers to the underlying reality as the pleroma, a term which he borrowed from the Gnostics. The pleroma cannot be described, because it has no qualities. In the pleroma, there are no opposites, like good and evil, time and space, or force and matter, since all these opposites are created by human thought.

Jung also believed that we have partial, occasional access to this underlying reality outside space and time; but his subterranean passage was not by way of bodily action but through 'synchronicity': that is, meaningful coincidence in time which is outside our habitual categories of space and causality. Jung gives as an example Swedenborg's vision of a fire which arose in his mind at the same time as an actual fire was raging in Stockholm. Jung comments:

'We must assume that there was a lowering of the threshold of consciousness which gave him access to absolute knowledge.' The fire in Stockholm, was, in a sense, burning in him too. For the unconscious psyche space and time seem to be relative; that is to say, knowledge finds itself in a space-time continuum in which space is no longer space, nor time time.'

Those who are inclined to dismiss such ideas as nonsense may find that David Peat's book *Synchronicity* persuades them otherwise. Peat understands modern physics, and is prepared to defend the idea that there is an underlying order in the universe in which causality and the division between mind and matter do not apply. Why did Schopenhauer single out music as being different in nature from the other arts? As we have already observed, music is neither propositional, nor does it usually imitate phenomena.
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do not put forward theories or inform us about the world; nor, except in rare instances like Delius’s *On Hearing the First Cuckoo in Spring*, or Haydn’s *The Creation*, does it represent the sounds of nature. Schopenhauer explicitly rejects imitative music as being inauthentic, including Haydn’s *The Seasons*, *The Creation*, and all battle pieces, because such music is no longer fulfilling its true function of expressing the inner nature of the Will itself.\(^\text{11}\)

Schopenhauer considered that the other arts were not merely imitations of external reality; or, that if particular works of art were so, they were also being false to their high calling. In his view, the function of the arts is not to depict particular instances of reality, but to represent the universals which lie behind the particular. For example, a painting portrays a particular woman and child as a representation of the Madonna and Christ; but, in order to qualify as high art, the picture must convey something of the essence of maternal love itself. Innumerable paintings of the Madonna and Child exist, but only the greatest artists create an image which transcends the personal, and which seems to portray the ‘divine’ element in maternal tenderness. What a great painting is concerned with is an archetype: an Idea which can only be manifested in a particular, but which itself transcends particulars.

The word *Idea* in the last sentence is given a capital letter because Schopenhauer took over Plato’s theory that Ideas, as ideal examples of, say, Justice, Goodness, Love, and Truth, existed as definable entities in some realm of generalities which could only be entered when men detached themselves from considering particulars in the mundane here-and-now.

And there is an absolute beauty and an absolute good, and of other things to which the term ‘many’ is applied there is an absolute; for they may be brought under a single idea, which is called the essence of each.\(^\text{12}\)

Plato thought that to understand what it is to be a good man, one must have an appreciation of Goodness as an absolute. In like fashion, if one wished to know whether a particular action or decision was just, one must have knowledge of Justice as an

abstract ideal. Schopenhauer said of the Ideas, ‘These are outside time, and consequently eternal.’\(^\text{13}\)

Jung thought precisely the same of archetypes, which he equates with the Platonic Ideas. Archetypes are primordial images which manifest themselves particularly in creative phantasy:

there are present in every psyche forms which are unconscious but nonetheless active – living dispositions, ideas in the Platonic sense, that preform and continually influence our thoughts and feelings and actions.\(^\text{14}\)

Jung came to believe that reality was

grounded on an as yet unknown substrate possessing material and at the same time psychic qualities. In view of the trend of modern theoretical physics, this assumption should arouse fewer resistances than before.\(^\text{15}\)

Although, at first glance, one might equate an Idea with a concept, Schopenhauer repudiated this. In his view, concepts, the tools of thought and of human communication, are cerebral constructs, whereas the eternal Ideas are antecedent to human thinking. The Idea manifests itself in various forms. The concept may bring together a variety of such manifestations under one heading; but it is not antecedent to thought but a product of thought.

The *Idea* is the unity that has fallen into plurality by virtue of the temporal and spatial form of our intuitive apprehension. The concept, on the other hand, is the unity once more produced out of plurality by means of abstraction through our faculty of reason; the latter can be described as *unitas post rem*, and the former as *unitas ante rem*.\(^\text{16}\)

Concepts, in Schopenhauer’s view, are essentially abstract cerebrations, which are somewhat lifeless. Artists who plan every detail of a work before embarking on it are using conceptual thought only; and hence produce dull, boring works because they have cut themselves off from the deeper sources of inspiration – the
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Ideas. Schopenhauer thought that it was the function of art to represent the Ideas. Art, he wrote:

repeats the eternal Ideas apprehended through pure contemplation, the essential and abiding element in all the phenomena of the world. According to the material in which it repeats, it is sculpture, painting, poetry, or music. Its only source is knowledge of the Ideas; its sole aim is communication of this knowledge. 17

To appreciate art, the observer must adopt a special attitude of mind; the same attitude required by Plato, of detachment from personal concerns, so that the work of art can be appreciated in contemplative fashion uncontaminated by personal needs or preoccupations.

For example, a man can look at a beautiful painting of a nude like the *Rokeby Venus* in two ways. He can see her as an object of desire, and perhaps experience some degree of sexual arousal. Or he can see her as an archetype of Woman, the essence of the feminine. The latter way of looking, in which personal interests and aims are temporarily discarded, is, according to Schopenhauer, the only way to appreciate art, and the only way, therefore, of obtaining a glimpse of the inner nature of the world. Schopenhauer calls this the 'aesthetic way of knowing'. It is an exercise in empathy. Worringer expresses it thus: 'We are delivered from our individual being as long as we are absorbed into an external object, an external form, with our inner urge to experience.' 18

When we employ the aesthetic way of knowing, we are temporarily removed from the tyranny of hopes and fears, of desire, of personal striving. And we are also abandoning the scientific way of knowing, which enquires into the nature of the object as existing in the external world, and into its relations with other objects. Thus, in the case of the *Rokeby Venus*, we might want to know when Velázquez painted the picture; how he obtained his effects; who was his model; who commissioned it, and so on. This is a perfectly legitimate way of approaching the painting; but employing it must necessarily prevent our appreciation of its inner meaning and significance during the time we are pursuing our enquiries. As noted earlier, the contrast between aesthetic and scientific knowing, between empathy and abstraction, is a particularly apt dichotomy when we consider the appreciation of music, and one which has given rise to controversy. It is a pity that Schopenhauer referred to what we now call empathy as the 'aesthetic' way of knowing, for abstraction is equally 'aesthetic'; perhaps more so, since it is more concerned with appreciation of proportion and structure.

Art was important to the pessimistic Schopenhauer because the aesthetic mode of knowing, the pure contemplation of beauty, the tranquil appreciation of the Ideas, enabled the individual to escape, for the time being, from the never-ending misery of unsatisfied desire into a Nirvana of spiritual peace.

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There always lies so near to us a realm in which we have escaped entirely from all our affliction; but who has the strength to remain in it for long? As soon as any relation to our will, to our person, even of those objects of pure contemplation, again enters consciousness, the magic is at an end. We fall back into knowledge governed by the principle of sufficient reason; we now no longer know the Idea but the individual thing, the link of a chain to which we also belong, and we are again abandoned to all our woe. 19

Whatever we may think of Schopenhauer's philosophical explanation, we can appreciate as accurate and illuminating this description of aesthetic experience temporarily 'taking ourselves out of ourselves' before we return to the everyday world of getting and spending. But Schopenhauer's portrayal of the aesthetic mode of knowing does not include arousal. Reading his account leaves one with the impression that being taken out of oneself, forgetting oneself as an individual, as he puts it, invariably leads to a contemplative state from which all passion is absent. In fact, he describes the aesthetic attitude as an objective frame of mind, as if stepping into another world, 'where everything that moves our will, and thus violently agitates us, no longer exists'. 20

But music can cause intense excitement. For example, hearing the fugal Finale of Beethoven's Razumovsky Quartet in C major, Op. 59, No. 3, is an exhilarating experience which is as far removed from the peace of Nirvana as one can possibly imagine. So
is listening to Haydn's 'Oxford' Symphony, or to Mozart's overture to _The Marriage of Figaro_. In Chapter Two, the relation between music and arousal was discussed. Physiological arousal does not always manifest itself in exhilaration, although this state is that most obviously incompatible with the tranquillity of Nirvana. We are also deeply moved, and therefore physiologically aroused, by tragedy. Arousal also enters into our appreciation of the other arts, although less obviously. I am sure that Schopenhauer, who had a wide knowledge and appreciation of the arts, was often deeply moved by them; but he did not make it clear that being deeply moved was compatible with the aesthetic way of knowing.

Schopenhauer's aesthetic mode of knowing is a mental set in which personal desires and strivings are abolished because the subject has lost himself in the contemplation of beauty. Freud's Nirvana is reached by the satisfaction of personal desires through instinctual discharge, or by regression to a condition resembling earliest infancy. For both men, the ideal is a tensionless state rather than one of arousal or excitement. Emotions are not pleasures to be sought, but intruders to be banished.

A profound pessimism underlies these ideas. The wish to abolish willing and striving, to avoid arousal, to purge oneself of desire, is life-denying rather than life-enhancing. Most human beings feel that arousal, in one form or another, is what makes life worth living. We crave excitement, involvement, enjoyment, and love. The Nirvana sought by Schopenhauer and Freud can only finally be found in Swinburne's 'The Garden of Proserpine', where 'even the weariest river winds somewhere safe to sea'. It is not surprising that Freud postulated a death instinct; an inner striving toward return to the inorganic state.

If we are to take it as a truth that knows no exception that everything living dies for internal reasons – becomes inorganic once again – then we shall be compelled to say that 'the aim of all life is death' and, looking backwards, that 'inanimate things existed before living ones'.

Wagner died in 1883, twelve years before Freud published his first psychoanalytic papers. Had he lived to appreciate Freud's later work, I feel sure that he would have embraced it with the same enthusiasm with which he welcomed the writings of Schopenhauer. For Wagner, the highest bliss was 'the bliss of quitting life, of being no more', as he himself wrote. The final scenes of _Der Fliegende Holländer_, _Götterdämmerung_, and _Tristan und Isolde_ demonstrate his initial belief that love can only find its ultimate fulfilment in death. In _ Parsifal_ and in the characters of Wotan and Sachs in _Siegfried_ and _Die Meistersinger_ respectively, Schopenhauerian renunciation of the will, rather than death, is the key to redemption.*

It is also possible to believe that love finds its fulfilment in more life – in children, grandchildren, and later descendants. But this implies a genuine appreciation of the importance of others. Narcissists are bound to feel that their own death is the end of everything that really matters.

Wagner had expressed at once the ultimate triumph, and the fallacy of humanism. He believes only in himself: his own feelings are the universe. That being so, his feelings can lead to nothing but their extinction. A yearning so fierce can be appeased only in its cessation; so the fulfilment of love is death.†

Schopenhauer and Freud were explicit atheists. Wagner vacillated throughout his life, at times denying Christianity, at times appearing to embrace it. Schopenhauer and Freud denied the possibility of an after-life; but all three believed in the immortality of their works. It is unsurprising that extinction of desire and striving constitutes an ideal state for each of these men of genius.

Schopenhauer put music in a special category. How does music differ from the other arts? Schopenhauer considered that poetry and drama are concerned with revealing the Idea of mankind as it manifests itself in the particular situations with which the poet or dramatist presents us. The Will, the underlying dynamic, is manifesting itself through the Idea, which is here acting as an intermediary.

The (Platonist) Ideas are the adequate objectification of the will. To stimulate the knowledge of these by depicting individual things (for

* I am indebted to Lucy Warrack for this observation.
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works of art are themselves always such) is the aim of all the other arts (and is possible with a corresponding change in the knowing subject). Hence all of them objectify the will only indirectly, in other words, by means of the Ideas. 24

In Schopenhauer’s view, music is different from all the other arts because it speaks to us direct: it bypasses the Ideas.

Therefore music is by no means like the other arts, namely a copy of the Ideas, but a copy of the will itself, the objectivity of which are the Ideas. For this reason, the effect of music is so very much more powerful and penetrating than is that of the other arts, for these others speak only of the shadow, but music of the essence. 24

Because music neither represents the phenomenal world, nor makes statements about it, it bypasses both the pictorial and the verbal. When we look at a picture, the fact of the picture’s existence as a tangible object in the external world acts as an intermediary between ourselves and the underlying Idea which the artist is expressing. When we read a poem, the words in which the poem is written act similarly. Since the painter must, by definition, express what he has to express in a picture, and the poet must express what he has to express in words, it may seem stupid to write of pictures and words as intermediaries. But, if we consider that paintings are representations of something which the painter wishes to convey to us, and if we also accept that language is intrinsically metaphorical, we can appreciate that the medium is not identical with the message, and may, in some sense, distort it, or present it incompletely. This, of course, is why artists are never satisfied with what they have produced, but are compelled to go on striving to find a yet more perfect way of expressing whatever it is that they want to convey.

Music, according to Schopenhauer, is understood immediately without any need to give any account of it or form any abstract conception of it. Hence, he is excluding Worringer’s ‘abstraction’: the objective mode of perception by which we judge the structure and coherence of a musical work. What music expresses is the inner spirit.

THE INNERMOST NATURE OF THE WORLD

This close relation that music has to the true nature of all things can also explain the fact that, when music suitable to any scene, action, event, or environment is played, it seems to disclose to us its most secret meaning, and appears to be the most accurate and distinct commentary on it . . . Accordingly, we could just as well call the world embodied music as embodied will; this is the reason why music makes every picture, indeed every scene from real life and from the world, at once appear in enhanced significance, and this is, of course, all the greater, the more analogous its melody is to the inner spirit of the given phenomenon. 25

Busoni had closely similar views about music expressing the inner significance of events and human feelings.

The greater part of modern theatre music suffers from the mistake of seeking to repeat the scenes passing on the stage, instead of fulfilling its proper mission of interpreting the soul-states of the persons represented. When the scene presents the illusion of a thunderstorm, this is exhaustively apprehended by the eye. Nevertheless, nearly all composers strive to depict the storm in tones—which is not only a needless and feeble repetition, but likewise a failure to perform their true function. The person on the stage is either psychically influenced by the thunderstorm, or his mood, being absorbed in a train of thought of stronger influence, remains unaffected. The storm is visible and audible, without aid from music; it is the invisible and inaudible, the spiritual processes of the personages portrayed, which music should render intelligible. 25

Schopenhauer claims that music expresses the Will direct as it manifests itself in the emotional life of man; that it closely corresponds to the fluctuations in emotional state which we all experience.

Now the nature of man consists in the fact that his will strives, is satisfied, strives anew, and so on and on; in fact his happiness and well-being consist only in the transition from desire to satisfaction, and from this to a fresh desire, such transition going forward rapidly. For the non-appearance of satisfaction is suffering; the empty longing for a new desire is languor, boredom. Thus, corresponding to this, the nature of melody is a constant digression
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and deviation from the keynote in a thousand ways, not only to the harmonious intervals, the third and dominant, but to every tone, to the dissonant seventh, and to the extreme intervals; yet there always follows a final return to the keynote. In all these ways, melody expresses the many different forms of the will's efforts, but also its satisfaction by ultimately finding again a harmonious interval, and still more the keynote.5

But, given Schopenhauer's belief that life predominantly consists of suffering, why should anyone want to contemplate the fluctuations of desire and satisfaction which Schopenhauer claims that music portrays, even if this portrayal is in the abstract? Would it not be preferable to concern oneself only with the impersonal; for example, with the beauties of the natural world? One might assume, from Schopenhauer's attitude, that he would only like music which predominantly portrays peace and stillness.

It therefore seems surprising that Schopenhauer singles out Rossini, whose music is so often vivacious that Lovey pejoratively described it as volatile, facile, and a rollicking rattle. Such descriptions are unfair to Rossini, but it is true that his music is usually lively rather than peaceful.

Everywhere music expresses only the quintessence of life and its events, never these themselves, and therefore their differences do not always influence it. It is just this individuality that belongs uniquely to music, together with the most precise distinctness, that gives it that high value as the panacea of all our sorrows. Therefore, if music tries to stick too closely to the words, and to mould itself according to events, it is endeavouring to speak a language not its own. No-one has kept so free from this mistake as Rossini; hence his music speaks its own language so distinctly and purely that it requires no words at all, and therefore produces its full effect even when rendered by instruments alone.58

Since Rossini was predominantly a composer of opera, in which words and music are closely intertwined, Schopenhauer's choice seems, at first sight, inexplicably eccentric. But he believed that, although the music of an opera was composed with reference to the drama, it was so concerned with the inner significance of the events portrayed that it bore little direct relation to those events as particular instances. He points out that the same music might be accompanying the passions of Agamemnon and Achilles or the dissensions of an ordinary family.

The music of an opera, as presented in the score, has a wholly independent, separate, and as it were abstract existence by itself, to which the incidents and characters of the piece are foreign, and which follows its own unchangeable rules; it can therefore be completely effective even without the text.59

Schopenhauer here anticipates the kind of criticisms which have been made of Deryck Cooke's The Language of Music, some of which we have already encountered. Music underlines and emphasizes the emotions which drama arouses in the spectator; but its capacity to portray and arouse specific emotions in the absence of drama - whether presented on stage or in real life ceremonies - is rather limited. For example, music alone cannot specifically portray jealousy; although the music used to underlie a dramatic scene of jealousy might deserve to be described as both passionate and agitated.

There is a fascinating discussion of these problems in Edward Cone's book The Composer's Voice. Cone points out that we are usually only partly aware of the prosodic elements of our own utterances. We can raise our voices without knowing that we are doing so; we can speak in tones which display an underlying gloom without the least awareness of our self-revelation. By adding music to words, the composer can bring out and emphasize the underlying emotional meaning of those words, irrespective of the insight or lack of insight of the character portrayed.

So when, as in song, a musical line is combined with a text, it is natural for us to accept the music as referring to a subconscious level underlying - and lying under - whatever thoughts and emotions are expressed by the words.60

As the quotations given above demonstrate, Schopenhauer believed that the music of an opera was, or could be, entirely
independent of the text; whereas Conic is emphasizing the close link between the two. But the philosopher and the musicologist join hands in thinking that music is concerned with the inner life rather than with external reality.

It is worth remarking that Schopenhauer was writing about the Western tonal system based upon the major triad as if it was the only musical system. He even refers to music as 'an exceedingly universal language', which, as already noted, it certainly is not. Schopenhauer could not, of course, anticipate the atonality of Schoenberg or the twelve-tone system. But he does not consider music based primarily on rhythmic variation rather than upon melody; or music using a pentatonic scale; or music using intervals smaller than the semitone. On the other hand, Schopenhauer's account of melody does formulate one feature of musical experience which some later authorities say is common to all varieties of music: that musical compositions are structured by setting a norm, then by deviating from that norm, and finally by returning to it. This closely resembles the theory of music advanced by Leonard B. Meyer which was discussed earlier.

Schopenhauer also anticipates the theories of Susanne K. Langer, although he is given only passing mention in her books *Philosophy in a New Key*, and *Feeling and Form*. Schopenhauer specifically stated that music does not express particular emotions directly.

But we must never forget when referring to all these analogies I have brought forward, that music has no direct relation to them, but only an indirect one; for it never expresses the phenomenon, but only the inner nature, the in-itself, of every phenomenon, the will itself. Therefore music does not express this or that particular and definite pleasure, this or that affection, pain, sorrow, horror, gaiety, merriment, or peace of mind; but joy, pain, sorrow, horror, gaiety, merriment, peace of mind themselves, to a certain extent in the abstract, their essential nature, without any accessories and so also without the motives for them. Nevertheless, we understand them perfectly in this extracted quintessence.

Instead of quoting this passage from Schopenhauer, Langer quotes from Wagner, who wrote what follows years before he encountered Schopenhauer. In view of the close similarity of the two passages, it is not surprising that Wagner later became an enthusiastic adherent of Schopenhauer's philosophy. Wagner affirms:

> What music expresses, is eternal, infinite and ideal; it does not express the passion, love, or longing of such-and-such an individual on such-and-such an occasion, but passion, love or longing in itself, and this it presents in that unlimited variety of motivations, which is the exclusive and particular characteristic of music, foreign and inexpressible to any other language.

This passage states, in different words, what Schopenhauer wrote in the extract given immediately above. Langer herself comments on what Wagner has to say.

Despite the romantic phraseology, this passage states quite clearly that music is not self-expression, but *formulation and representation* of emotions, moods, mental tensions and resolutions — a 'logical picture' of sentient, responsive life, a source of insight, not a plea for sympathy.

What is not clear from Schopenhauer's account is how music differs from, say, poetry, in furnishing a more direct expression of the innermost nature of man. For are not the tones which music employs comparable with the words which poetry employs? And is it not true that both poetry and music are representations of the inner life, not the inner life itself?

Schopenhauer claimed that music more directly expresses the inner life than the other arts because it does not make use of the Ideas. Music goes deeper than pictures, deeper than words. But music employs tones; and tones, as indicated in the first chapter, are seldom found in nature. Western music, with which Schopenhauer was concerned, consists of tones arranged in a variety of melodic, rhythmic, and harmonic patterns. These patterns may have little connection with the external world; but, because their construction requires considerable artifice, music can hardly be regarded as the immediate objectification and copy of the inner life or Will which Schopenhauer claimed it to be. Music, by employing sounds which
are not found in nature, and which are arranged in extremely complex ways, may certainly be expressing the inner life in metaphorical fashion; but its composition requires as much conceptual thought as poetry.

Schopenhauer did not really take this into account, as evidenced by his writing:

The invention of melody, the disclosure in it of all the deepest secrets of human willing and feeling, is the work of genius, whose effect is more apparent here than anywhere else, is far removed from all reflection and conscious intention, and might be called an inspiration. Here, as everywhere in art, the concept is unproductive. The composer reveals the innermost nature of the world, and expresses the profoundest wisdom in a language that his reasoning faculty does not understand . . .

No one can deny that melodies can be the result of inspiration; but many require much revision and amendment, as Beethoven's sketchbooks repeatedly demonstrate. It is also true, as we know from accounts by poets of their own creative processes, that some lines of poetry come unbidden to the poet's mind, and are, therefore, equally 'far removed from all reflection and conscious intention'. Schopenhauer's attempt to put music in a special category for the reasons which he advances is unconvincing. However, there are other observations which support his intuition.

Michael Tippett, the composer, echoes some of what Schopenhauer writes about music portraying the inner flow of life, but adds a comment which goes some way to explaining why we want to reproduce and experience this flow, which is exactly what Schopenhauer fails to do. Tippett writes:

Symphonic music in the hands of the great masters truly and fully embodies the otherwise unperceived, unsavoury inner flow of life. In listening to such music we are as though entire again, despite all the insecurity, incoherence, incompleteness and relativity of our everyday life. The miracle is achieved by submitting to the power of its organized flow, a submission which gives us a special pleasure and finally enriches us. The pleasure and the enrichment arise from the fact that the flow is not merely the flow of the music itself, but a significant image of the inner flow of life. Artifice of all kinds is necessary to the musical composition in order that it shall become such an image. Yet when the perfect performance and occasion allow us a truly immediate apprehension of the inner flow 'behind' the music, the artifice is momentarily of no consequence; we are no longer aware of it. 

In the present context, the most important sentence from this quotation is the second one. Tippett is suggesting that listening to music makes us aware of important aspects of ourselves which we may not ordinarily perceive; and that, by putting us into touch with these aspects, music makes us whole again. This function of music was discussed in Chapter Five.

Malcolm Budd, in his compelling assault on Schopenhauer, demolishes practically everything which the philosopher has to say about music. He ends his chapter on Schopenhauer by writing:

Schopenhauer is the musician's philosopher. But Schopenhauer's philosophy of music is not a fitting monument to the art.

I agree with some of the criticisms which Budd makes of Schopenhauer's philosophy; indeed, after writing this chapter, I found that I had echoed many of the same criticisms from a different point of view. And, although I accept and owe a good deal to some of Jung's ideas, I part company with Jung at precisely those points at which he is closest to Schopenhauer. That is, I find it hard to believe in the pleroma, or to accept the notion that archetypes, or Platonic Ideas, exist as definable items in a kind of limbo beyond time and space. If there is an underlying reality consisting of things-in-themselves, I am inclined to believe that we have no access to it.

It seems to me that the primordial images which constitute archetypes or the Ideas are powerfully compelling because they refer to fundamental aspects of experience which are common to all men. Thus, the observer who detects the Idea of Love as being instantiated in Rembrandt's The Jewish Bride is acknowledging Rembrandt's skill in demonstrating the deepest essential features of that universal human experience. A wedding portrait photograph of Mr and Mrs Jones, however skilfully posed and lit, is unlikely to exhibit the essentials of love because it cannot be as selective as can a painting by a great master. It is generally acknowledged that the
greatest works of art in any field are great because they are concerned with universals. It does not follow that these universals have some kind of ghostly existence outside space and time. This is not to deny that there are concepts and ideas which cannot be placed in space. Numbers are real but not tangible; the relation between tones which constitutes music exists but cannot be portrayed.

I am not sure that Schopenhauer's distinction between the concept and the idea is wholly convincing; but the sense of difference which he seeks to explain by this means is certainly recognizable. Most people would agree that there are musical works which seem dull and lifeless because, regardless of the ingenuity of their construction, they do not touch the heart. Although many would not agree with him, Constant Lambert thought this of some of Stravinsky's neo-classical works. He is even more critical of Hindemith, whose music seems to Lambert to reflect nothing but sterile, workman-like proficiency.

But we can surely agree with Schopenhauer in thinking that some works of art are cerebral, void, and lacking inspiration, without accepting his philosophical explanations. The greatest artists are able to plumb their own depths, and bring to the surface aspects of those basic emotions which are common to all mankind. Lesser artists are seldom able to do this; and even the greatest sometimes produce work which is clearly superficial. Schopenhauer of course realizes this; it is his interpretation of the difference which alienates his critics.

Nevertheless, I would be inclined to salvage more of what Schopenhauer writes about music than Malcolm Budd is prepared to do. Schopenhauer postulates two ways in which we can gain some kind of limited, subterranean access to the true nature of reality, one being our experience of our own physical being and its movements, the other being by way of music. Although I do not agree that either gives privileged partial access or proximity to the kind of underlying reality which Schopenhauer assumes, I am interested that he links music and subjective physical awareness as both being concerned with experience in depth. I earlier quoted John Blacking's observation that 'Many, if not all, of music's essential processes can be found in the constitution of the human body and in patterns of interaction of bodies in society . . . .'²⁸
Jung specialized in the treatment of middle-aged people for whom life had become meaningless. In such cases, as in his own case, he regarded healing as predominantly a religious problem.

Nietzsche too retained a religious attitude, in spite of his rejection of Christianity and his proclamation of the death of God. According to Walter Kaufmann, his translator, expositor, and biographer, Nietzsche 'felt that the death of God threatened human life with a complete loss of all significance'.

And Jung claimed:

Nietzsche was no atheist, but his God was dead... The tragedy of Zarathustra is that, because his God died, Nietzsche himself became a god; and this happened because he was no atheist. He was of too positive a nature to tolerate the urban neurosis of atheism.

Nietzsche certainly became boastful and grandiose before he finally collapsed; but grandiose delusions are a well-recognized feature of general paresis, and Jung fails to take this into account in his pejorative description of Nietzsche's state of mind.

In fact, Nietzsche was closer to Jung's point of view than the latter allowed. Jung, referring to individuation, used religious language directly. Nietzsche preferred the language of aesthetics to describe his own search for meaning. Although Jung and Nietzsche were very different human beings, their shared loss of conventional religious belief resulted in both men acknowledging a need for dependence on something other than the ego; perhaps on an inner ordering process which proceeds unconsciously. Nietzsche was not being grandiose when, in a wonderful passage in Beyond Good and Evil, he refers to the artist's need for spiritual discipline, for what he calls protracted obedience in one direction: from out of that there always emerges and has always emerged in the long run something for the sake of which it is worthwhile to live on earth, for example virtue, art, music, dance, reason, spirituality - something transfiguring, refined, mad and divine.
activity. Although Nietzsche could not have met Mendelssohn as he died in 1847 when Nietzsche was only three years old, he often visited the Krug house when he was a boy and began to compose music and write poetry before reaching adolescence. He became an accomplished pianist and a composer of songs, piano pieces, and choral works. Historians of the psychoanalytic movement will like to know that amongst Nietzsche's compositions is a setting for chorus and orchestra of a poem by Lou Andreas-Salomé, 'Hymnus an das Leben'. Nietzsche met Lou Andreas-Salomé in 1882, fell in love with her, and proposed marriage, which she rejected. She became a femme inspiratrice for him, as she did for Rilke. In later years, she became a psychoanalyst and a close friend of Freud. A picture of her still hangs on one of the walls in Freud's consulting room, now part of the Freud Museum in Hampstead.

For Nietzsche, music remained a lifelong passion. Nietzsche became hopelessly insane and finally died in 1900. But even after his capacity to handle words had disappeared, he was still able to extemporize at the piano. Music was one of his first creative activities: it remained his last.

In *The Birth of Tragedy*, Nietzsche discusses a dichotomy to which I referred in the last chapter. It comes close to one aspect of musical experience. Nietzsche derived from Bachofen* the notion of two attitudes or principles associated with the gods Apollo and Dionysus. Whereas Bachofen had identified Apollonian culture as patriarchal and Dionysian as matriarchal, Nietzsche portrayed the two principles as representing order versus inspiration.

Apollo, the deity of light, presides over the inner world of phantasy and dream. He is the god of order, measure, number, control, and the subjugation of unruly instinct. He especially manifests himself in the art of sculpture. Dionysus, in contrast, is the god of liberation, of intoxication, of unbridled licence, and of orgiastic celebration. He especially manifests himself in music.

It is likely that Freud's sharp division of mental functioning into irrational 'primary process' versus rational 'secondary process'

owed something to Nietzsche's dichotomy of Dionysian and Apollonian. Although Freud denied having read Nietzsche until after his own ideas had been formulated, it is now known that when he was at university he belonged to a student reading society in which the ideas of Schopenhauer and Nietzsche were discussed. Moreover, Nietzsche preceded Freud in the use of the term sublimation and id.* Freud owed more both to Nietzsche and to Schopenhauer than he acknowledged or perhaps admitted to himself.

In Jungian terminology, the Apollonian state is one of introversion in which the subject contemplates the dream world of eternal ideas. It is close to Schopenhauer's aesthetic way of knowing. The Dionysian state is one of extraversion, of physical participation in the external world through feeling and sensation. Jung devotes a chapter to the subject in his book *Psychological Types*.

According to Nietzsche, Greek tragedy springs from a reconciliation or union between these two opposing principles. (In his later writings, Nietzsche uses 'Dionysian' in a different sense, as passion controlled. He attacks Christianity for attempting to get rid of passion altogether, and uses Dionysus versus the Crucified rather than Dionysus versus Apollo.)

Both Schopenhauer and Nietzsche were profoundly aware of the horrors of existence. But, whereas Schopenhauer conceived art as being a refuge, a realm into which a man could temporarily escape from the dissatisfaction of life into a state of contemplation, Nietzsche viewed it as something which could reconcile us with life rather than detach us from it. Because of art, we need not negate the will. Nietzsche believed that it was the weak who followed Schopenhauer by denying life: the strong affirm it by creating beauty. This is especially relevant to the art of tragedy.

The metaphysical comfort - with which I am suggesting even now, every true tragedy leaves us - that life is at the bottom of things, despite all the changes of appearances, indestructibly powerful and pleasurable . . . ."

*It is interesting that Edmund Gurney, in *The Power of Sound* (1880), refers to 'the power of Music to have become sublimated, as it were' (p. 120).
MUSIC AND THE MIND

Tragedy does not teach 'resignation' – To represent terrible and questionable things is in itself an instinct for power and magnificence in an artist; he does not fear them – There is no such thing as pessimistic art – Art affirms... For a philosopher to say, 'the good and the beautiful are one' is infamy: if he goes on to add, 'also the true,' one ought to thrash him. Truth is ugly.

We possess art lest we perish of the truth.\(^{11}\)

Nietzsche's view of life, in spite of his awareness of its horrors, is essentially affirmative; whereas Schopenhauer sees no hope but denial and detachment. As Walter Kaufmann puts it:

Nietzsche envisages 'the sublime as the artistic conquest of the horrible'; and he celebrates the Greek 'who has looked with bold eyes into the dreadful destructive turmoil of so-called world-history as well as into the cruelty of nature' and, without yielding to resignation or to 'a Buddhist negation of the will,' reaffirms life with the creation of works of art.\(^{12}\)

So the creation of tragedy is both a response to the horrors of life and a way of mastering them. From tragedy, it is possible to learn to appreciate life as sublime in spite of the suffering which living entails. Nietzsche makes us understand why it is that even tragic masterpieces, like the slow movement of the 'Eroica' Symphony, or Siegfried’s Funeral March from Götterdämmerung, are life-enhancing. We have moved beyond mere enjoyment of music to a condition in which we are saying 'Yes' to life as it actually is: tragic, ecstatic, painful, and joyful. The essential theme of The Birth of Tragedy is Nietzsche's perception that art makes sense of the world and justifies existence.

Nietzsche realized – no one more vividly – that the only life we know is constituted by opposites. Pleasure is inconceivable without pain; light without darkness; love without hate; good without evil. The pleroma may contain no opposites, but in life, heaven and hell march hand in hand; it is only in the never-never land of the after-life that they become separate entities. This is why the greatest art always includes tragedy, why it must embrace tragedy as well as triumph; why the denial of suffering is the negation of life itself.

A JUSTIFICATION OF EXISTENCE

Nietzsche believed that the creative process was stimulated by adversity; more especially, by ill-health, whether physical or mental. He would have appreciated modern views which link liability to manic-depressive illness with creativity.\(^{13}\) Nietzsche regarded illness as a challenge which ought to strengthen a person's resolve. It is only by overcoming adversity that a human being can discover his true potential. Heine puts these words into the mouth of God in the last stanza of his Schöpfungslieder:

 Diseased was the most basic ground
 Of my creative urge and stress:
Creating, I could convalesce,
Creating, I again grew sound.\(^{14}\)

Nietzsche believed that those varieties of philosophy which promised religious or aesthetic solutions to the problems of life were especially likely to have originated from physical illness.

The unconscious disguise of physiological needs under the cloaks of the objective, ideal, purely spiritual goes to frightening lengths – and often I have asked myself whether, taking a large view, philosophy has not been merely an interpretation of the body and a misunderstanding of the body.\(^{15}\)

He himself suffered from headache, indigestion, insomnia and other symptoms even before the illness which killed him had made itself manifest. When still a schoolboy in 1856, he was granted absence from school because of headaches and pain in the eyes. Headache remained a recurrent problem. He had to give up his professorship at the University of Basel at the age of thirty-four because of ill-health. In spite of this, he wrote to Georg Brandes: 'My illness has been my greatest boon: it unblocked me, it gave me the courage to be myself.'\(^{16}\) Illness also had the effect of partially isolating him from social life. Nietzsche called his Thus Spoke Zarathustra ‘a dithyramb to solitude’.

Nietzsche's repudiation of Schopenhauer's resignation and negation is closely allied with his break with Wagner. Nietzsche first encountered Wagner in November 1868, when he was twenty-four.

...
Nietzsche’s concern to merge Apollonian with Dionysian matches Schopenhauer’s observation that

In the course of life . . . head and heart grow more and more apart; men are always separating more and more their subjective feeling from their objective knowledge.  

Nietzsche’s insistence on aesthetic experience as the only means of justifying existence is dependent on linking subjective and objective; more especially, on linking mind and body. He said: ‘I have always written my works with my whole body and life.’ In *The Will to Power*, Nietzsche claims that art has a direct effect on bodily experience, and that this is why it is life-affirming, even when its subject-matter is tragic.

In *The Gay Science*, Nietzsche wrote:

And so I ask myself: What is it that my whole body really expects of music? I believe, its own case: as if all animal functions should be quickened by easy, bold, exuberant, self-assured rhythms; as if iron, leaden life should be gilded by good golden and tender harmonies.

My melancholy wants to rest in the hiding places and abysses of perfection: that is why I need music.

Given this view of art, it is not surprising that Nietzsche repudiated Christianity. Nothing could be further from his vision than the insipid, conventional Christian picture of a heaven in which angels perpetually praise the Almighty with harp and song, and from which sorrow, death, sin and darkness have been entirely banished. The negation of tragedy is the negation of life.

Another reason for Nietzsche’s rejection of Christianity is its insistence on the superiority of soul over body, and its tendency to label sexuality as evil. He believed that superior individuals ought to learn to control, master, and sublimate their instinctual drives; but he did not think that they should try to abolish them or regard them as evil.

Nietzsche, like Freud, thought that it was dangerous to deny the body’s needs; that repression of the passions leads to crime and other evils. In *Thus Spoke Zarathustra*, Nietzsche has a section titled ‘Of the Despisers of the Body’.

Nietzsche would have agreed with John Blacking’s observation that music’s essential processes are found in the constitution of the human body and in patterns of interaction of bodies in society. Nietzsche’s description of the effects of music in *The Will to Power* echoes Blacking’s account of the communally life-enhancing effect of *ishikona*, the Venda national dance.

All art exercises the power of suggestion over the muscles and senses, which in the artistic temperament are originally active; it always speaks only to artists – it speaks to this kind of a subtle flexibility of the body . . . All art works tonically, increases strength, inflames desire (i.e., the feeling of strength) . . . Every enhancement of life enhances man’s power of communication, as well as his power of understanding. Empathy with the souls of others is originally nothing moral, but a physiological susceptibility to suggestion . . . Compared with music all communication by words is shameful; words dilute and brutalize; words depersonalize; words make the uncommon common.

In *The Birth of Tragedy*, Nietzsche emphasized the inability of the lyric poet to express the inner spirit of music, and, at the same time, attributed to music a special significance rather similar to that given it by Schopenhauer.

Language can never adequately render the cosmic symbolism of music, because music stands in symbolic relation to the primordial
contradiction and primordial pain in the heart of the primal unity, and therefore symbolizes a sphere which is beyond and prior to all phenomena. Rather, all phenomena, compared with it, are merely symbols: hence language, as the organ and symbol of phenomena, can never by any means disclose the innermost heart of music; language, in its efforts to imitate it, can only be in superficial contact with music; while all the eloquence of lyric poetry cannot bring the deeper significance of the latter one step nearer."

Later, again in *The Will to Power*, Nietzsche wrote: "That music may dispense with words and concepts — oh what advantage she derives from that fact."

Nietzsche's description of the inadequacy of language in this context gains support from an unexpected source. The poet Paul Valéry envied composers because the tones they use to create music are precisely defined, measured, and classified. In contrast, the words employed by poets are often ambiguous and open to misinterpretation:

Language is a common and practical element; it is thereby necessarily a coarse instrument, for everyone handles and appropriates it according to his needs and tends to deform it according to his personality. Language, no matter how personal it may be or how close the way of thinking in words may be to our spirit, is nevertheless of statistical origin, and has purely practical ends. Now the poet’s problem must be to derive this practical instrument the means of creating a work essentially not practical... How fortunate is the musician! The evolution of his art has given him an altogether privileged position for centuries... Ancient observations and very old experiments have made it possible to deduce, from the universe of noises, the system or the universe of sounds... These elements are pure or are composed of pure — that is to say, recognizable elements. They are sharply defined and — a very important point — the way has been found to produce them in a constant and identical manner by means of instruments which are, basically, true instruments of measure."

I have already noted the gradual divergence between speech and music; the development of objective, abstract language designed to convey information and to communicate ideas rather than to share feelings. This must be the kind of language to which Nietzsche is referring when he says that 'words depersonalize'. The fact that conceptual thought demands the separation of thinking from feeling, of object from subject, of mind from body, suggests that music may be one way of bridging this division. Nietzsche would have appreciated Zuckerkandl's exposition in his great book *Sound and Symbol*.

Words divide, tones unite. The unity of existence that the word constantly breaks up, dividing thing from thing, subject from object, is constantly restored in the tone. Music prevents the world from being entirely transformed into language, from becoming nothing but object, and prevents man from becoming nothing but subject... It is certainly no accident that the highest unfolding of the power of tones in modern instrumental music and the highest unfolding of the power of objectifying words in modern science coincided historically with the sharpest divisions ever drawn between subjectivity and objectivity."

Both Nietzsche and Zuckerkandl are referring to the language of science and conceptual thought. Neither makes it clear that, whilst this kind of language has indeed underlined the division between subjective and objective, other kinds of language serve different purposes.

Rhetoric is both emotive and subjective and may persuade without informing us, as we noted when quoting one of Hitler's speeches. Poetry, even if it is as vulnerable to misinterpretation as Valéry suggests, can be entrancing and so illuminating that we see the world around us with new eyes. Prose, especially if it is 'musical' in the sense of employing rhythmically balanced phrases like those of Gibbon, or if it is notable for its clarity like that of Freud or Bertrand Russell, can so beguile us with its elegance that we fail to appreciate its content. Kant said that he had to read Rousseau's books several times because, at first reading, 'the beauty of the style prevented him from noticing the matter.' Words are not always as shameless and brutal as Nietzsche alleges.

It is clear that all works of art must be formed of both Dionysian and Apollonian elements in varying proportion, for art cannot exist
without human feelings, nor without means of ordering and expressing those feelings. Nietzsche's emphasis upon the Dionysian elements in music did not blind him to the composer's need to impose order upon his musical material. In this context, it does not matter that Nietzsche thought that Wagner's pessimistic stance had robbed music of 'its world-transfiguring, affirmative character'. What does matter is that Nietzsche believed that the music of other composers could have a world-transfiguring, affirmative character.

It seems to me that what is unusual and particularly worth noting in Nietzsche's thought about music is, first, that he recognized music as an art which could not only reconcile one to life but could also enhance it. Tchaikovsky and Berlioz, when depressed, found music to be a life-saver. Nietzsche goes further. Music not only makes life possible, but also makes it exciting. He refers to music as a means by which the passions 'enjoy themselves'; not as escapist, or other-worldly; but as an art which, by exalting life as it is, transcends its essential tragedy.

Second, he recognized that music was physically and emotionally based: it was rooted in the body, and Dionysian, however much it had to be shaped and organized by Apollonian techniques. When Nietzsche discussed his own previous writings in Ecce Homo, he said of The Birth of Tragedy: 'A tremendous hope speaks out of this essay. In the end I lack all reason to renounce the hope for a Dionysian future of music.'

Third, he understood that music linked the two principles of Apollo and Dionysus in the same way as tragedy. Christianity had attempted to banish Dionysus from art; but, in music, Dionysus could be born again in gaiety and joy.

In late 1871, he wrote in a letter:

If only a few hundred people of the next generation get what I get out of music, then I anticipate an utterly new culture. There are times when everything that is left over and cannot be grasped in terms of musical relations actually fills me with disgust and horror.

Nietzsche's perception of music as so significant that it can make life worth living seems utterly remote from the mundane preoccupations of Western politicians and educators. Of course it is right that they should be concerned with raising standards of literacy, with increasing expertise in both sciences and crafts, with equipping men and women with the skills necessary to earn a living in a world increasingly dominated by technology. But a 'higher standard of living' does not make life itself worth living. The arts can do so; and, amongst the arts, music is profoundly significant, as Nietzsche perceived. In my view, Nietzsche understood music better than any other modern philosopher; perhaps because he himself was an accomplished pianist and composer.