

Perspectives in Music

By Helena Gandra



The difference between art and non-art is merely one of perception and we can control how we organize our perceptions- Kyle Gann in "No Such Thing as Silence"

The 21st century is an era characterised by diversity. By looking at the 19th and 20th centuries, one can better understand the music of their own time. The Present is shaped by both a past and a future. Wagner (1813-1883) and John Cage (1912-1992) are key figures in music history and have had a fundamental impact on the music of today. Both composers enjoyed fierce support as well as a fierce opposition. They are hardly ever associated, due to the perceived diversity in their approach; however I will claim that they share many features in common. I will be looking in particular at their use of silence in two pieces. All the information acquired was resultant of previous research and my own analytical view of two particular works of two different composers that have an equally but very distinct importance to what silence is and how it can be utilized in musical composition: Tristan and Isolde's overture (1857-1859) by Wagner and 4"33"" (1952) by Cage.

In fact, silence and music are in a very tight relationship, to the point that silence can be considered a musical tool as well as sound. Silence has always been a very important characteristic in music, however; only recently it acquired a fundamental role in the musical context.

This paper is divided into three parts: in chapter 1, I will be exploring the definition of silence, the difference between silence, sound and music and how is it represented in music tradition; in chapter 2, I will be defining Wagner's musical aesthetics and the role that silence plays in Wagner's work Tristan and Isolde's overture; finally in chapter 3, I will determine Cage's musical aesthetics and the role that silence plays in his piece 4"33"". Relationships and comparisons will be established between the two composers and their philosophy of music, as well as their social and political context. In more general terms, I will raise questions regarding the ontology of silence and music. Indeed I will be reflecting on the role of silence in reshaping a new understanding of music.

The methodology utilized in this thesis is qualitative and therefore, I will approach the study of musical works and their comparison from a musical, philosophical, historical, and socio-political perspective. In terms of literature review, the information acquired in relation to Cage and silence

was very useful and easy to find since there are so many writings on the subject. However, gathering information on Wagner and silence was a harder task, as it is not a usual topic in the studies of his work. I, therefore, tried to combine facts with my critical response to the information obtained.

Chapter 1. Silence in Music

Silence...

What is silence? The answer appears simple, but it has actually generated very complex answers, especially in music. Indeed, the ontology of silence has been profoundly questioned in 20th century music. As I see it, such a question is on a par with "Why is the sky blue?" or "Why does the sun shine?"; why should one wonder such matters when they are understood to be unavoidable facts? Why question a notion such as silence in music, which is so ingrained in tradition? From childhood, human beings are inculcated with several notions that accompany them throughout their lives without ever stopping to question them. When one does though, it may be seen as a provocation, the act of a mad man. The fact is that such questioning is vital to create the grounds for change and progress. Inspired by such spirit of inquiry and embracing my own madness I decided to investigate more on the fascinating subject of silence in music.

Silence is an extremely difficult word to define, and therefore challenging it produces new and engaging ways to think about music. The Oxford Dictionary defines silence as the "complete absence of sound." This definition immediately leads to the question of whether it is possible to ever achieve "complete absence of sound." The answer seems to be no. Indeed absence of sound could only exist in a vacuum. Therefore, one could never fully experience the absence of sound. Even though, if one managed to be in a vacuum, which would mean there would be no sounds, there are always the sounds of our body and the ones of our imagination, that are not necessarily exteriorized. Would it constitute music, if not exteriorized? Bearing this in mind; I believe that such a definition is overly simplistic. In music, silence is featured most prominently as a rest. According to the Oxford Concise Dictionary of Music, a rest can be designated as a "musical silence" or as "notation of absence of sound in the performer's part for a length of time corresponding to a given number of beats or measures." This seems to imply that, although there is an absence of sounds, a sense of

beat is still present. Therefore music, although inaudible, is still occurring. Indeed, one could go as far as saying that a performer is "playing" a rest; thus, at a conceptual level, silence is musical material as much as sound. Furthermore, a rest does not mean that there is complete absence of sound around the performer. As discussed above, there is always sound, however some of these sounds, such as contingent sounds – so called "ambient noise" – as they are not fruit of the work of the composer, are considered inferior, and therefore unwanted. In my opinion, a better definition of silence is given by David Toop that explains it as "a withdrawal from action." [i] This signifies that if sound consists in a reaction to action, for silence to exist it would have to be an abolished action, the non-existence of a human action. Nevertheless one can try to be even more accurate and add to Toop's definition. I propose the definition of silence as a "withdrawal of intentional sound based on human action". In my opinion, however, sound is based on human intention that is externalized by way of actions; therefore, if there is no intention, there is no action, which means no sound, and ultimately, silence.

Since 'silence is conterminous with sound' [ii] what is sound after all? What does Toop mean by this? In my opinion it means that silence and sound constitute the same field, they are just in an ambivalent position, where they oppose and support each other. There are many different interpretations for this question. I think the most interesting one is "(...) the sound is a thin high acupuncture needle of a note, held for some time; sometimes nothing happens at all, for more than some time." [iii] In this definition sound is already envisaged as music, as tone, but contingent sounds and background noise, although being sound, are not traditionally considered music. What makes a difference between sound and a musical composition? Is there a distinction at all? According to Cooper "a musical composition is basically an organization of sounds. Sounds as physical phenomena fall mainly in two classes: tone and noise." [iv] It is quite an interesting point as it raises the question of whether silence can be a musical composition. If a musical composition is constituted by an organization of sounds, and in fact silence is sound, then silence is effectively a musical composition.

Furthermore there is always going to be a problem of definition related to the distinction between tone and noise, since it is such a subjective matter. In my view the problem is the human tendency of trying to find a closed and fixed mean-

ing to concepts such as “music” and ‘silence.” One must accept that there are certain aspects that are just open to interpretation and re-interpretation, and silence, such as love or hate, is easily felt but not precisely definable. “Hearing more like feeling: a multiplicity of impressions at the edge of perception.”[v] Silence therefore is not only a physical activity but it is also cultural.

It is interesting how all things can be made to relate to each other. Silence is such a broad area of study: it includes physical, psychological, political, social, and even historical aspects. When did silence in music start? It is difficult to tell when it started, perhaps as difficult as saying when music started, since they seem to be so intimately bound. It certainly had a fundamental importance in medieval music, especially in Gregorian chant, where in the end of each sentence there was silence (e.g. Ego Sum Alpha; Expurgate Vetus Fermentum) and throughout the years became of greater importance due to the increase on diversity of significances that silence obtained.

It is interesting how much importance has been attributed to Wagner’s Tristan and Isolde because of its chromatic passages that dissolved tonal music, but what is often overlooked is the significance of silence in such a work, which in my view is as important as its chromaticism. It is silence that, consciously and subconsciously, affects the way we perceive and the way we feel in relation to the story. Silence became more and more a conscious feature in music, especially in the works of Claude Debussy (1866 – 1918) Erik Satie (1866–1925), Anton Webern (1883–1945), Luigi Russolo (1885 – 1947), Morton Feldman (1926 – 1987) and John Cage (1912 – 1992). However silence is not only an important musical feature, but also extremely important in a social context, for instance in religious worship. Buddhism is probably one of the religions[vi] that gives more importance to the meaning of silence. While Wagner was composing Tristan and Isolde he was reading Schopenhauer’s philosophy, which was in part an interpretation about Buddhism.

Cage composed 4”33”” while also being interested in Buddhism, and in particular Zen Buddhism. This is obvious in the treatment of his music where characteristics of showing that human logical reasoning can never obtain enlightenment, but enlightenment can be obtained by the sudden flash of insight resulting from the bringing into conjunction of illogical sequences.[vii] Given the importance of Buddhism in both

works I will explore further their relationship to this philosophy in the next chapters.

Chapter 2. Silence in Wagner

The importance of silence in Wagner’s work may not be immediately apparent. Wagner’s music has often been thought of as dense, heavy and loud, that he ‘shouts when he should whisper.”[viii] Wagner’s music is considerably loud in the dynamics sense, due mostly to the use of many brass instruments. The full orchestration of Tristan and Isolde is immense (3 Flutes, 2 Oboes, 1 English Horn, 2 Clarinets, 1 Bass clarinet, 3 Bassoons, 4 Horns, 3 Trumpets, 3 Trombones, 1 Bass Tuba, 1 Pair of Kettledrums, Triangle, 1 pair of Cymbals, Harp, Violins, Violas, Cellos, Bases) and new developments in terms of performance were required with Wagner’s operas and dramas, since singers were not used to dealing with such an enormous orchestra and large scale operas, both in size and duration.

Another important feature in Wagner’s aesthetics is the “unendlich melodie” (unending melody), which David McCleery defines as “a continuous entity: not only there is absence of individual musical numbers, but there are virtually no breaks between musical phrases throughout the work.”[ix]

Are not these ideas conflicting with the notion of silence, then? The fact is even though Wagner’s music seems not to have any breaks or silence (in the traditional term) Tristan and Isolde’s prelude is actually based on the contrast of extremes such as silence versus sound, and this is, in my opinion, a strategy Wagner employs to manipulate the audience’s emotions. In fact, that was Wagner’s main objective, to control the audience’s reaction and to lead them to feel something. Wagner seems to have been successful in his aims as his music usually generates strong feelings, either in favour of or against it. Barry Millington said that “what can be expressed in the language of music is only feelings and emotions (...) What remains inexpressible in the language of music by itself is an exact definition of the object of feeling and emotion.” [x] The notion that music has the power to communicate something beyond language, beyond what is possible to be rationalised, has been the premise for Nietzsche’s philosophy of music.

Indeed Nietzsche believed that Attic tragedy was the art form that was able more than any other to communicate

this irrational aspect, which he believe to be the truth about life. Tragedy was a fusion of all arts, in which music is more important than anything else because of its ability to deal with a metaphysical dimension, which Nietzsche called the Dionysian, opposed to the rationality of the Apollonian. Nietzsche championed the music of Wagner as an example of an incarnation of Attic tragedy. Indeed in Tristan and Isolde, more than in any other work by Wagner, the music is more important than the words. According to Nietzsche music should be itself. There is no mediation in expressing music, and that is why it is the only way one could have direct access to the Dionysian force. If so, would it be possible that Cage’s way of understanding music was directly connected with this Dionysian side? Since 4”33”” is not controlled by the composer, and therefore is not an expression of the individual, but it is music in itself and celebrates nature, and since the sounds come from nature itself, could it be that this work is the most truthful one could experience while living? If so, could it be that ‘silence” is the key to the Dionysian truth?

All the bibliography related to Tristan and Isolde, references the musical phrases with the silence in between them as the sighs of the intense yearning of the two lovers, which only accomplish unity in the transfiguration. Although, there is much more to it than this simple explanation of why Wagner composed this prelude in the way he did. First of all, Wagner at this stage was very influenced by Schopenhauer and Buddhist philosophies, as confirmed by Barry Millington[xi].

Renunciation in the Buddhist philosophies is the path that leads to enlightenment, which in Tristan and Isolde means the renunciation of sensual pleasure leading to the climax of the opera and true love. In these philosophies, entering the deepest field of Zen ideologies, one can only acquire enlightenment by the use of meditation, in which silence and environmental sounds are most important. It is quite interesting that Cage was influenced by the same philosophy, but as a result composed 4”33”, a work that in appearance is very different from Tristan. Would it be possible to consider that Wagner wrote Tristan and Isolde’s opening phrases with so much ‘silence” because he was under the influence of these philosophies? I believe there is evidence that he did so. Therefore, in this case, silence acquires an ambivalent form: silence as the traditional sense of “no pre-programmed music” and “rests” and silence as sound and environmental sound. It is the contrast between sound and

silence that lends Wagner's work power. If those rests were not there and it was just a quick succession of chords, in which the "Tristan chord" was included, it would not have had the same effect in the opera, and certainly not the same importance. For the reader to have a better understanding I will give an example: in Schindler's *List* the entire film is shot in black and white, except for the dress of a little girl which appears in red. It is obvious that what brings attention upon the girl is the fact that the rest of the picture is in black and white. This is a very similar idea to the function of silence in Wagner's music and in fact, to most German music from the late 19th century.

Tristan and Isolde is also the work in which listeners experienced for the first time an ambiguous use of tonality: the famous "Tristan chord" that led to the dissolution of tonality.

The musical language of *Tristan* is characterized by its dislocation of tonality and extreme chromaticism in both line and harmony. Never before had the Classical tonal system been so stretched: dominant sevenths and other discords are constantly left unresolved, cadences remain uncompleted and both melodies and harmonies are consistently heightened by chromatic alteration. All these devices are geared to the generation and intensification of tension – the tension of promised but evaded fulfilment [xii]

I believe that the Tristan chord gave way to Cage's aesthetics. It is interesting to understand that for Nietzsche dissonance and chromaticism were seen to be more close to reality and in reality "dissonance (in effect, any chord other than the basic major or minor triads) had more powerful expressive potential than any consonance (...)" [xiii] and indeed Wagner used these dissonances to expressive results.

The twelve-tone music and serialism developed by the Second Viennese School signalled the dissolution of tonality. Composers such as Schoenberg and Webern created a system where they had almost complete control over the work of art, culminating in the works of Pierre Boulez (such as *Piano Sonata no.1* (1946)). In apparent opposition to this type of music we have Cage's music, whose main objective was to give total freedom to the work of art. In Cage's philosophy silence is not the opposite of music. In Cage's view music is sound and sound is music and silence is sound, so silence does not exist. This notion will be further explored in chapter 3.

Wagner not only authored some of the most important music writings and made reformations in relation to public performances [xiv], but he also made way for new types of music to develop, such as Spectral music [xv], Serialism and Twelve-tone music [xvi] and in my opinion, he influenced also the development of the study of silence and therefore, Cage. In fact, "the language of music changed so rapidly after Wagner as much because of the impossibility of surpassing his supreme balancing act between integrative and disruptive forces within the language of tonality, as from the conscious and positive desire of composers go beyond the Wagnerian style." [xvii]

Chapter 3. Silence in Cage

As noted in the previous chapter, Wagner had a profound influence on the way music was developed throughout the 19th and 20th century.

With *Tristan and Isolde* tonality and music were pushed to the limit and what was traditional and conventional was questioned for the first time. The dissolution of tonality brought new techniques and styles in music, bringing variety to the 20th century.

The main question is: how did the dissolution of tonality ultimately give way to the dissolution of "music"? To answer this question one needs to understand how did Cage "compose" *4"33"* and the aesthetic philosophy that informed him.

Cage studied with Adolph Weiss, Henry Cowell and Arnold Schonberg. Influenced by these composers he was immediately interested in chromatic counterpoint and his aim was to develop dodecaphonism to a 25-note series. Serialism and dodecaphonism are extremely rational and complex systems, where the composer is highly in control of the piece of art. However, ultimately, for someone that does not analyse the score and only listens to the piece, this controlled is not possible to be perceived, but sounds appear to be in a non-particular order. Cage progressively moved towards more indeterminate forms of composition, where the resulting sound could not have been predicted by the score.

If the final product is quite the same, what is the difference between Cage's approach in "freeing" sound and the control exerted by the serialist composers? What is the difference between a work of art and not? Is the control of the

process of creation what makes it art? Since the result is almost the same to the listener, but the score is completely distinct, it has to be the process of creation. Or maybe, there is no difference at all...

Indeed, Wagner's obsession in creating the *Gesamtkunstwerk* ("total artwork") where all the arts (poetry, dance and music) were connected to create the "perfect" work of art (drama), on a conceptual level does give the impression to be very different from Cage's approach to the happenings, where there was dance, painting and music all connected to create a final product. Once again, the goal was the same, that of uniting all art forms into one work, however very different approaches and distinct processes of creation were implemented and utilized by the two composers. It is in this process that the greatest difference seems to lay: Wagner wished to control the work of art, while Cage did not. Cage believed in chance and nature; these were the components that in the end would "control" the work of art.

So, what is the purpose of the work of art? Once again, similarities between the two composers are very explicit. In a time where Germany was divided into states and there was political and social unrest, the main objectives of Wagner's art were the renewal of art, and eventually of the renewal of the nation. The unity of the artwork thus, would have engendered social, ethical, and religious unity. [xviii] Cage could be said to have lived in a similar context, as he lived in the United States, a country where different cultures coexisted and which was developing a national and artistic identity. How can a country distinguish itself from others, if there is nothing original or individual about it? Therefore it was important for American composers to find their own voice in music. However, Kyle Gann stated that "for American composers the path to national authenticity was not so obvious. Formal models were inherited from Europe, and there was no clear American auditory model to learn from." [xix] What would be the best way to find a sound for America, other than using the sound of America? Indeed, nothing could be more authentic than the sound of America's nature and environment. Kyle Gann understands *4"33"* as "a beginning point, or perhaps the final beginning point from a series, of a particularly American process: the imitation of nature as a way of locating an indigenous American aesthetic." [xx]

However, not everybody agreed to Cage's approach of what American music (and music in general) was supposed to sound like. Some thought that 4"33"" took no musical skill to perform, or that it was a joke. However, even if it had indeed been a joke, this would not discredit its significance. It is understandable that for audiences, the first experience of 4"33"" would have been extremely shocking, but ultimately, few years from that first performance, the powerful emotions caused by it, have subdued and the piece has slowly been accepted as part of the Western art music repertoire. It was not the first time that a piece was not very well received by an audience, in fact, its initial divided reception has been a recurrent pattern in the history of music, and especially that of the 20th century.

The following quote relates to one of the negative reactions to Cage's music in the 20th century:

True the composer has played some shameless games with the public. His idiotic composition 4"33"" – which consists simply raising the piano lid for that duration of time and then closing it again – seems to have no other object than getting the audience to listen to the random sounds that might emanate from the hall. [xxi]

This sort of reaction can be compared to the negative reactions to Wagner's music in the 19th century:

Edmund Pfuhl, refuses to play excerpts from Tristan for Hans's sister, Gerda, with the comments: "That is not music – believe me! I have always flattered myself I knew something about music – but this is chaos. [xxii]

The main question remains: what is music?

Listeners accept Wagner's music in the 21st century very well. It "only" took two centuries for this change in musical taste. How long will it take for 4"33"" to be accepted? There are signs that it is gaining more and more relevance in more conservative environments, for instance an orchestra performed this work recently. Maybe it will take another century until this piece becomes "traditional"...

Many elements were touched with 4"33"", including the role of music, score, audience and performer. If the environmental sound is music, then obviously, the performer is "nature" and the everyday life. The "tradition" of performance

is therefore questioned. The same approach was taken by Wagner years before. The composer required specific aspects from musicians (especially singers) that were too advanced for his time and therefore he expanded the performer's role. With time, there was an evolution of the role of the performer in terms of skills and techniques, musicality and tastes, and what was an "impossible" job at that time, is a very "normal" process nowadays. Singing Wagner is still not easy, however, there are many professionals qualified to do so, many more than when the opera was first composed.

Cage's 4"33"", is not technically difficult to perform, but it is very difficult to be in the position of the performer, especially with an audience that does not understand the implications of such a piece. Possibly in a few years this will be the normal approach to performance, only time will say so.

4"33"" has a traditional score. The piece is programmed to have 3 movements but the only performance instruction reading "tacet," which means that the musician is not supposed to play. If the musician does not play and the "music" comes generally from the audience that means that there is an inversion of roles. The performer is now the audience and the audience is the performer. However, the performer is the one that has the score, so technically, everybody in the room is a performer and also the audience at the same time. The first time the piece was performed it was at the piano, although Cage does not specify which instrument should be used. Another important characteristic of this music is that it will never be performed in the same way, because a performance consists not only in the piece of music, score, performer and audience, but also in the contextualization, venue, and circumstances that are many times determined by elements of chance and indeterminacy, very typical in Cage. Music is past, present, and future. We can have access to the path of music by recordings, the present and the future through performances. The way we listen to it will always be different, depending on cultural, political, philosophical, psychological and social implications. Two listeners can have two very notable different experiences listening to the same piece of music and 4"33"" reflects about these characteristics as well.

In fact music and silence have changed its value and characteristics throughout the centuries. What was typical music of the 19th century for example is very different from the typical music of the 21st century, and our interpretation of music

of the 19th century is filtered by our 21st century sensibility, so it is always biased in some way. The same happens with silence: silence in the 19th century was not the same as silence in the 21st century. With the Industrial Revolution and all the technological advances that evolved from it, silence started to include different sounds. Russolo said:

Ancient life was all silence (...) The loudest of noises that interrupted this silence was neither intense, nor prolonged, nor varied. After all, if we overlook exceptional movements of the earth's crust, hurricanes, storms, avalanches and waterfalls, nature is silent.[xxiii]

Although Cage was very influenced by Russolo [xxiv] and his theory about noise and music, there are some differences to consider, Russolo lived in the early 20th century, in the aftermath of the Industrial Revolution and for him, because all technical and mechanical advances were very new, he considered that music and sound were represented by these progresses and nature was silence. For Cage nature is also silence, but silence is sound, so nature is music.

In the 21st century we live in constant noise and sound, especially in the big cities. I consider therefore, that Cage composed 4"33"" as an invitation to pay attention to their surroundings which they may have never really considered or reflected about – such as silence. That there may be just sound, no stops, no breaks, no rests. Sound was very much pushed to the limit by Wagner, however, the importance of silence in Tristan and Isolde, as I have explained in the previous chapter, is not to be underestimated. This is a lesson for composers, musicians and listeners, to stop and listen, because there is sound and music everywhere, even if one is not intentionally creating music. People's lives already have a very big soundtrack with background music, even though one does not realize it. However, even if one does not realize what is around himself or herself, it does not mean it does not exist. In Russolo's words "every manifestation of life is accompanied by noise. Noise is thus familiar to our ear and has the power of immediately recalling life itself." [xxv]

Conclusion

The objective of this project was to gain an understanding of different approaches in using silence in music; demonstrating the relevance of thinking about silence when composing

music; the development of a fresh perspective on the philosophy of music in the 19th and 20th century, and ultimately answering the question "How can composers use effectively silence as a composition tool?"

Based on my research I claim that silence as defined in the dictionaries and used in the everyday life does not exist. I believe that silence is sound, after Cage's definition. However this does not mean that silence as sound is any less difficult to define. Because of the contingent nature of sound and silence one cannot give an entirely satisfying answer to what silence is.

The music tradition has also taught us that sound is music and, since sound is everywhere, music is everywhere. One does not need a composer and score to have music, because it is in every sound that we hear, we just need to listen carefully. There is no clarifying aspect of what art is, but I am inclined to believe that art is based on our perception and subjectivity of taste. This can be developed with study and cultural, philosophical, political, and social awareness.

There is nothing that distinguishes silence, sound and music, apart from the process of creation. Intention is what I believe to be the key of music. However, not personal or individual intention, but nature's intention, which is also constituted by the composer's will. The human being is part of nature, as sound and 'silence' are.

Even though Wagner and Cage have many differences, the more I researched into the works of the two composers, the more I discovered similarities. They were under the same philosophical influences, had a very similar approach in political terms and the conception of a musical work was quite alike, however the final product and process of creation are very dissimilar, but again the reactions to them were quite similar. Both utilized silence in a very different context, and this is what is interesting about silence, the fact that it has so much significance and possibilities in the way it can be explored. In fact, I believe that according to Nietzsche's theory of music in itself to discover enlightenment, Cage's 4"33"" have what Wagner's Tristan and Isolde did not have, which is the fact that it is not controlled by the will of the composer but by nature itself, and therefore is the best way to the truth. This could not be developed in itself, and the Tristan chord was, in my belief, an important step for the developments that would lead to Cage's work.

Changes occur every day, and we live in a society that does not stop to observe and listen, because there is no time to lose. As the saying goes "time is money" and when money is involved there is no time to think. That is the problem that the 21st century faces, the fact that everybody wants everything immediately, but in the end they do not want it anymore. Music is consumed as a commodity it has no value. That is why Wagner and Cage's relevance goes beyond music; it could be interpreted as a warning of what is happening in society. Music should be more than just entertainment, even though entertainment is necessary as well, sometimes. Music should communicate, and silence is one of the most important ways of communication. Not saying anything sometimes means more than saying a lot. In the words of Ghandi (1868 – 1948) "In the attitude of silence the soul finds the path in a clearer light, and what is elusive and deceptive resolves itself into crystal clearness. Our life is a long and arduous quest after Truth."

NOTES

- [i] Toop, David – Haunted Memory: Music Silence and Memory (pg.257)
- [ii] Ibid. (pg.46)
- [iii] Ibid. (pg. 247)
- [iv] Cooper – Learning to Listen, (pg. 46)
- [v] Toop, David – Haunted Memory:Music Silence and Memory (pg.46)
- [vi] The Oxford Dictionary describes Buddhism as being a "widespread Asian religion or philosophy"
- [vii] Keown, Damien, A very short introduction to Buddhism (pg.80)
- [viii] Millington, Barry – The Wagner Compendium (pg. 301)
- [ix] McCleery, David - Music of The Romantic Era (pg.78)
- [x] Millington, Barry – The Wagner Compendium (pg. 300)
- [xi] Millington, Barry – The Wagner Compendium (pg. 300)
- [xii] Millington, Barry - The Wagner Compendium (pg. 300)
- [xiii] Ibid. (Pg.301)
- [xiv] Wagner was the first to forbid conventional boxes in the theatre, discouraging applause during acts and turning down lights at the start of performances.
- [xv] Spectral music - Music composed using analysis of the frequency content of sound as a basis for harmonic work. Wagner is said to have been the first spectral composer, with the opening of "Lohengrin" (1845-1848).

[xvi] Serialism - a compositional technique in which the twelve notes of the chromatic scale, are used to generate the harmonic and melodic basis of a piece. The revolutionary "Tristan chord" from Wagner's "Tristan and Isolde's overture" led to the dissolution of tonality, which led naturally to other systems such as the twelve tone and Serialism.

[xvii] Millington, Barry - The Wagner Compendium (pg. 301)

[xviii] Millington, Barry - The Wagner Compendium (pg.232)

[xix] Gann, Kyle - No Such Thing as Silence (pg. 23)

[xx] Ibid. (pg.22)

[xxi] Davies, Laurence - Paths to Modern Music (pg.313)

[xxii] Ibid. (Pg. 7)

[xxiii] Russolo - The Art of Noises (pg. 23)

[xxv] Ibid. (Pg. 27)

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