

**AN APPRAISAL OF FRIEDRICH NIETZSCHE'S PHILOSOPHY OF MUSIC**

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**BENIN CITY.**

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**AN ORIGINAL ESSAY SUBMITTED TO THE DEPARTMENT OF  
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**CERTIFICATION**

This is to certify that this project, AN APPRAISAL OF FRIEDRICH NIETZSCHE'S PHILOSOPHY OF MUSIC was carried out by **OSASERE FAITH EKHATOR**, with Matriculation Number: **ART2101086** of the Department of Philosophy, Faculty of Arts, University of Benin, Benin City, Edo State, Nigeria, and that it is sufficient in both scope and content in partial fulfilment of the requirement for the award of Bachelor of Arts (B.A) Degree in Philosophy.

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**Date:.....**

**Date:.....**

## **DEDICATION**

This project is dedicated to God Almighty for his favor and kindness rested upon my life.

I also dedicate this to my family

## ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

Firstly, my deepest and most gratitude to God Almighty for his sustenance, guidance and kindness upon my life. I must sincerely appreciate my project supervisor, Professor Felix Airoboman, for his kind efforts, direction and guidance during my project supervision and his impactful teachings throughout the years.

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## **TABLE OF CONTENTS**

Title Page	i
Declaration	ii
Certification	iii
Dedication	iv
Acknowledgements	v
Table of Contents	vii
Abstract	ix
<b>CHAPTER ONE: GENERAL INTRODUCTION</b>	
1.1 Background to the Study	1
1.2 Statement of Problem	4
1.3 Methodology	6
1.4 Purpose of Study	6
1.5 Significance of the Study	7
1.6 Scope of Study	9
1.7 Definition of Terms	10
1.8 Literature Review	12
<b>CHAPTER TWO: THE CONCEPTION OF MUSIC IN PHILOSOPHY</b>	
2.1 A General Conception of Music	18
2.2 Music from Aristotle's Perspective	26

2.3 Rene Descartes' Position on Music	32
2.4 Boethuis' Music Ideology	37
2.5 Augustine of Hippo's Ideology of music	44
<b>CHAPTER THREE: CONCEPTUALIZING NIETZSCHE'S PHILOSOPHY OF MUSIC</b>	
3.1 Biography of Friedrich Nietzsche	50
3.2 Nietzsche's Early Vision of Art and Life	56
3.3 Music in the Context of Nietzsche's Philosophy	59
3.4 Musical Taste in Nietzsche's Work	63
3.5 Nietzsche, Wagner and the Crisis of Music	66
3.6 Arthur Schopenhauer's View of Music as Metaphysical Will	71
3.7 Music Beyond Metaphysics	73
<b>CHAPTER FOUR: EVALUATION AND CONCLUSION</b>	
4.1 Evaluation	78
4.2 Recommendations	83
4.3 Conclusion	89
BIBLIOGRAPHY	93

## ABSTRACT

*Friedrich Nietzsche's theory of music, which integrates art, metaphysics, and human life, has a distinctive and significant position in contemporary aesthetics. According to Nietzsche, music is not just an artistic medium but the most immediate and essential representation of life itself. He sees music in *The Birth of Tragedy* (1872) as the purest expression of the "Dionysian" spirit, which is an elemental, untamed, and life-affirming energy that goes beyond reason and language. In contrast to other art forms, which depend on representation and form (the "Apollonian"), music communicates directly to the will and the core of being, providing a providing metaphysical comfort and exposing the underlying currents of human existence. Nietzsche's later works go on to highlight the revolutionary potential of music, praising its capacity to influence culture and individual personality while denouncing excessively intellectualized or decadent forms of it. musical art. This perspective is in stark contrast to two other well-known schools of thought on music. Nietzsche first admired Arthur Schopenhauer, who saw music as a direct manifestation of the metaphysical "Will," the underlying reality of all phenomena, and thus raised its status. superior to all other arts in its ability to express the essence of the universe. Eduard Hanslick, on the other hand, maintained that the value of music resides in its structure, form, and autonomous beauty, regardless of its emotional or metaphysical content, in accordance with his formalist theory. The Analytic approach will be used in this study to analyze and try to evaluate Nietzsche's conception of music. As a result, Nietzsche's concept is at a crossroads between aesthetic experience and metaphysical depth: it extols music as a life-affirming force that goes beyond mere form and placing music as a deep and vibrant expression of human vitality while simultaneously refuting Schopenhauer's pessimism and Hanslick's aloofness.*

## CHAPTER ONE

### GENERAL INTRODUCTION

#### 1.1 BACKGROUND TO THE STUDY

One of the most contentious and important figures in Western philosophy, Friedrich Nietzsche (1844–1900), had a singular and deep appreciation for music. Music remained a core thread throughout the course of his intellectual growth, from his early philosophical works to his autobiography and personal correspondence. In contrast to many of his peers, Nietzsche saw music not just as an art form, but also as a profound reflection of life itself, a portal to existential bravery, emotional truth, and metaphysical knowledge. In his first book, *The Birth of Tragedy* (1872), Nietzsche's concept of the philosophical importance of music is first brought into focus. There, Nietzsche uses Arthur Schopenhauer's metaphysics and the aesthetics of ancient Greek tragedy to support his assertion that music can reveal the innermost essence of reality, the "will," in ways that no other art form can. He posits a dualism between the Apollonian (order, form, clarity) and the Dionysian (chaos, ecstasy, unity), arguing that the tension and fusion of these opposite forces gives rise to genuine art, particularly music. During this early period, Nietzsche believed that music was a means by which people could transcend their individuality and momentarily unite with the eternal, chaotic stream of life.<sup>1</sup>

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<sup>1</sup> Friedrich Nietzsche, *The Birth of Tragedy*, (New York: Vintage Books, 1967) p. 53

Nietzsche's early musical philosophy was also influenced by his strong personal and intellectual respect for the composer Richard Wagner. Wagner was seen by him as the contemporary personification of the Dionysian spirit a cultural hero who could resurrect the legendary and tragic essence of ancient Greece in the modern world. In Nietzsche's opinion, Wagner's operas had the capacity to bring back a sense of profundity, unity, and vigor to German culture, which he saw as becoming more and more fragmented and superficial. According to Nietzsche, Wagnerian art would lead a new cultural dawn in which music would serve as the metaphysical heartbeat of society. But Nietzsche's connection with Wagner and his aesthetic ideals did not stay the same. Nietzsche started to pull away from Wagner and the Schopenhauerian metaphysics that had supported his earlier works by the late 1870s. This shift represents a major break in both a philosophical and a personal sense. Nietzsche's publications, such as *The Case of Wagner* and *Nietzsche Contra Wagner*, severely criticize Wagner's music as decadent, manipulative, and overly sentimental. Nietzsche loathed and connected Wagner's art with aspects of Christian morality, romantic nostalgia, and psychological weakness, which he saw as indicators of cultural decline.<sup>2</sup>

Nietzsche's changing perspective on music mirrors his overall philosophical development. Nietzsche came to see art as valuable for its capacity to embrace life in all its misery and complexity, rather than for its capacity to console or transcend, as he shifted from

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<sup>2</sup> Friedrich Nietzsche, *Nietzsche: Contra Wagner*, (Edinburgh: T.N. Foulis books, 1911) p. 85

metaphysical pessimism to his own philosophy of the will to power. Music comes to represent life, power, sensuality, and clarity in his later thinking. In contrast to the pathos and moralism of Wagner, Nietzsche lauds composers such as Georges Bizet for personifying these virtues. At this later stage, music is no longer a metaphysical escape but a celebration of life, a means of aesthetic opposition to nihilism and decadence.<sup>3</sup>

Nietzsche's thoughts on music are philosophically significant because they are inextricably linked to his larger themes: the reevaluation of values, the affirmation of life, the critique of morality, and the deconstruction of metaphysics. Nietzsche believed that music was the most powerful artistic ally of philosophy, not an adjunct. His lifelong connection with music offers a distinctive viewpoint from which to comprehend his intellectual development and existential commitments.<sup>4</sup>Nietzsche believes that art is a crucial tool for spiritual renewal and philosophical understanding, and that aesthetics and ethics are intimately related in his works, which is shown by this. For this reason, it is imperative to conduct a timely assessment of Nietzsche's philosophy of music. It urges readers of today to rethink the purpose of art as an existential imperative rather than as a source of entertainment or moral education, thereby illuminating one of the most perplexing aspects of his thinking. This research seeks to examine the evolution of

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<sup>3</sup> Markotic Lorraine, *The Music of Nietzsche*, (Illinois: Northwestern University Press, 2017) p. 45

<sup>4</sup> Tetzlaff Wolfgang, *Nietzsche and Music: Aestheticism and Philosophy*, (Berlin: Peter Lang Publishing, 2001) p. 61

Nietzsche's musical thinking, its philosophical underpinnings, its changes and inconsistencies, and its continuing relevance to aesthetics, culture, and the philosophy of life.

## **1.2 STATEMENT OF PROBLEM**

One of the most profound but frequently undervalued elements of Nietzsche's philosophical legacy is his contemplation on music. His engagement with music as a metaphysical notion and as a cultural influence continues to be understudied in relation to his overall philosophical evolution, even if academics often stress his critiques of morality, religion, and metaphysics. Nietzsche's changing views on music, particularly his dramatic shift from romanticizing the Dionysian might of music in *The Birth of Tragedy* to condemning the decadence of Wagnerian opera in his later writings, create a complicated and often contradictory image that needs more academic study.

The central challenge is comprehending the philosophical role of music in Nietzsche's philosophy: How does music fit into his value system, and how does it represent the development of his existential and cultural worries? Furthermore, Nietzsche's rejection of metaphysical solace in favor of life affirmation calls into question the shifting aesthetic standards by which he judged musical performance. In Nietzsche's works on music, there is a conceptual problem between metaphysical romanticism and aesthetic existentialism that needs to be carefully examined.

Furthermore, the immature treatment of Nietzsche's philosophy of music in modern discussion frequently ignores its significance to larger discussions on aesthetics, philosophy of art, and cultural critique. It is necessary to methodically evaluate how Nietzsche's thoughts on music support or contradict current aesthetic theories, especially those that address the connection between art and truth, morality, and human flourishing. This research aims to explore the philosophical underpinnings, development, and ramifications of Nietzsche's ideas on music in order to address the apparent contradictions and illuminate their relevance in the larger context of his philosophy. Additionally, it aims to examine how Nietzsche's philosophy of music may provide a framework for reevaluating the place of art in human experience, especially in the context of nihilism and cultural decadence.

### **1.3 METHODOLOGY**

The method of conceptual and critical analysis will be used in this study. With this in mind, we can approach the work with the right mindset to analyze ideas, concepts, and grape knowledge. The project will be structured into four chapters: Chapter one will provide an overview of the entire discussion, Chapter two will concentrate on Nietzsche's life and times, Chapter three will cover Nietzsche's philosophy, and lastly, Chapter four will offer an evaluation, summary, and conclusion of our discussion in the essay.

### **1.4 PURPOSE OF STUDY**

This study aims to critically evaluate and analyze Friedrich Nietzsche's music philosophy as a central yet frequently neglected aspect of his overarching philosophical endeavor.

The research has the following specific objectives:

1. Investigate Music's Role in Nietzsche's Early and Later Thoughts. This study aims to discover how Nietzsche's view of music changes from a metaphysical, Schopenhauerian ideal to a life-affirming aesthetic expression of the will to power by following his philosophical development from *The Birth of Tragedy* through his later writings.

2. Conduct a Critical Evaluation of Nietzsche's Relationship with Richard Wagner, Taking into Account the Complex Nature of Nietzsche's Relationship with Wagner, Which Began with Admiration and Later Involved Harsh Criticism. Analyze How This Relationship Reflects the Shift in Nietzsche's Philosophical Perspective on Music, Art, and Culture.

3. Examine the Philosophical and Existential Significance of Music, looking for evidence of how Nietzsche saw music not just as an art form, but as a potent existential force that may affirm or reject life, influence culture, and deal with the harsh realities of human suffering and meaning.

4. By placing Nietzsche's philosophy of music within the broader framework of aesthetic theory, the study aims to emphasize its significance to current discussions about the role,

value, and aim of art in human life, particularly in the context of nihilism, moral decay, and cultural revival.

## **1.5 SIGNIFICANCE OF THE STUDY**

The implications of this research are significant for both the discipline of philosophy and for wider discussions of culture and aesthetics. The study focuses on Nietzsche's philosophy of music, illuminating an area of one of the most important figures in modern Western thought that is sometimes understudied. It provides a new viewpoint on Nietzsche's work, enhances current aesthetic theory, and encourages a closer examination of the philosophical and cultural significance of music. This study's relevance may be summarized as follows:

1. **Shedding Light on an Ignored Facet of Nietzsche's Thinking:** Although Nietzsche's critiques of morality, religion, and metaphysics have been extensively researched, his aesthetic theory, particularly his ideas about music, has not received the same level of academic scrutiny. This research fills this gap by showing that music was not only a personal interest for Nietzsche, but an essential component of his comprehension of art, culture, and life.
2. **Contribution to the philosophy of art and aesthetics:** Nietzsche's thoughts provide a revolutionary viewpoint on the function of music and art in human life. His perception of music as a reflection of life's tragic beauty and vitality contradicts conventional beliefs

that art is just a representation or a moral lesson. This research contributes to continuing discussions in aesthetics by highlighting Nietzsche's singular notion that music is a transformative power that goes beyond reason and morality.

3. Engagement with Important Cultural and Existential Questions: Nietzsche's approach to music is inextricably linked to his larger worry about the fall of civilization and the spread of nihilism in the contemporary world. The research encourages us to consider the function of music and art in modern society, whether as a way of escape, a source of moral comfort, or a means of existential empowerment, by examining his critique of decadent art forms and his advocacy for life-affirming aesthetics.

4. Understanding of the Evolution of Nietzsche's Philosophy: The evolution of Nietzsche's perspective on music, from the metaphysical idealism of *The Birth of Tragedy* to the existential realism of his later works, reflects the course of his whole philosophical development. Our comprehension of major Nietzschean themes like the will to power, the *Übermensch*, eternal recurrence, and the revaluation of values is improved by comprehending this development.

5. Relevance to Interdisciplinary Research: The findings of this research are important to scholars in intellectual history, literature, cultural studies, musicology, and philosophy. It facilitates interdisciplinary study into how artistic and intellectual expressions mold and mirror human experience by bridging the divide between philosophy and music.

## 1.6 SCOPE OF STUDY

This study is limited to a philosophical evaluation of Friedrich Nietzsche's thoughts on music, as stated in his significant and lesser works, as well as in chosen letters and personal writings. Its main emphasis is on the aesthetic, metaphysical, cultural, and existential functions of music in Nietzsche's worldview. The study covers the following topics:

1. Chronological Overview of Nietzsche's Ideas: The book follows the development of Nietzsche's thoughts on music from his early work (*The Birth of Tragedy*, 1872) through the middle period (*Human, All Too Human* and *The Gay Science*) to his later writings (*Thus Spoke Zarathustra*, *Beyond Good and Evil*, *The Case of Wagner*, *Ecce Homo*). Special emphasis is placed on how Nietzsche's changing assessment of music reflects his philosophical development.
2. Philosophical and Aesthetic Evaluation: The work critically examines Nietzsche's musical aesthetics from a philosophical perspective, rather than providing a simply historical or biographical study. It examines the consistency and inconsistencies in his ideas in order to determine their significance for philosophy, art, and culture.
3. Relationship to Other Thinkers and Movements: The study examines Nietzsche's engagement with significant intellectual influences (such as Arthur Schopenhauer and Richard Wagner) and how his theories differ from or coincide with other schools of

thought in aesthetics and the philosophy of art. Given the breadth of the topic, we will restrict the scope of our investigation to specific areas, such as:

Giving a technical overview of music theory or composition.

Additionally, unless it helps us comprehend Nietzsche's philosophy, we won't look at the entire spectrum of his impact on subsequent musicians.

The psychological or neurological underpinnings of music appreciation are outside the purview of this philosophical study, even if they are connected.

## **1.7 DEFINITION OF TERMS**

The following are the definitions of the main words used in this work in order to guarantee clarity and conceptual accuracy:

1. The Philosophy of Music is a field of aesthetics that examines the nature, significance, and experience of music. It addresses basic issues about the nature of music, its impact on people, and its significance in culture and life. This research focuses particularly on Friedrich Nietzsche's philosophical thoughts and theories about the meaning and purpose of music.

2 Metaphysics: The study of the basic nature of reality and existence is a branch of philosophy. Nietzsche's early writings, which were influenced by Schopenhauer, saw music as a metaphysical representation of the "will. " Nietzsche's later writings shift

toward a more existential and life-affirming perspective on art, as well as a criticism of metaphysics.

3. Will to Power: A key idea in Nietzsche's later philosophy, which alludes to the underlying motivation or energy behind all human action and life itself. It symbolizes the pursuit of strength, development, mastery, and self-conquest. Nietzsche eventually came to believe that the value of music lies in its ability to express or augment this will to power.

4. Decadence is what Nietzsche calls the downfall of culture, ethics, or the arts, particularly when art turns excessively sentimental, life-denying, or moralistic. He compares much of Wagner's later music to decadence and contrasts it with life-affirming art that fosters vigor and fortitude.

5. Nihilism: The idea that life has no intrinsic meaning, worth, or objective. The demise of religion and metaphysical certainties, according to Nietzsche's diagnosis, frequently makes nihilism a key issue of modernity. According to Nietzsche, music may either help overcome nihilism by affirming life in its entirety or contribute to it by fostering passivity or giving false comfort.

6. Life Affirmation: A fundamental Nietzschean notion that refers to the acceptance and celebration of life in all its chaos and suffering, without resorting to illusion or denial.

The possibility of music as a means of affirming life, particularly in Nietzsche's later works, is explored in this study.

7. Tragic Art: Art that deals with life's suffering, uncertainty, and finite nature without turning to escapism. According to Nietzsche, tragic art particularly that seen in Greek tragedy and music promotes existential bravery and facilitates a deeper understanding of the human condition.

8. Aesthetic Existentialism: A philosophical position that views art as crucial to comprehending life and embracing its meaning via subjective and creative interaction, as opposed to through religious or objective realities. Nietzsche is seen in this research as a precursor to this perspective, especially in his later understanding of music.

## **1.8 LITERATURE REVIEW**

Although Friedrich Nietzsche's philosophy has been extensively studied, his ideas on music, which were central to both his earlier and later writings, have sometimes been regarded as secondary to his critiques of morality, religion, and culture. This literary review provides a critical assessment of the most significant academic contributions to Nietzsche's philosophy of music, emphasizing important interpretations, discussions, and lacuna in the current body of knowledge. A rich but fragmented field is shown in the literature on Nietzsche's musical philosophy. Although significant academics have provided insightful analyses of various periods of Nietzsche's thinking, there is still a

need for a thorough and critical evaluation that considers the development of his musical aesthetics, evaluates its philosophical consistency, and investigates its ramifications for modern thought. This research seeks to address this gap by presenting a comprehensive analysis of Nietzsche's philosophy of music as a key element of his critique of culture, metaphysics, and life.

One of the fundamental texts for our understanding of Nietzsche's philosophy of music is *The Birth of Tragedy*, where he introduces the Apollonian and Dionysian dualism, as stated by Nietzsche.<sup>5</sup>

In his book *Nietzsche: Philosopher, Psychologist, Antichrist*, Walter Kaufmann highlights the Schopenhauerian metaphysical basis of Nietzsche's early aesthetic theory, which views music as the immediate representation of the metaphysical will.<sup>6</sup>

Julian Young contends in the book *Nietzsche's Philosophy of Art* that Nietzsche's early perspective regarded music as the highest art form due to its exceptional ability to convey the universal, transcending representational limitations.<sup>7</sup>

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<sup>5</sup> Friedrich Nietzsche, *The Birth of Tragedy*, (New York: Vintage Books, 1967) p. 56

<sup>6</sup> Kaufmann Walter, *Nietzsche: Philosopher, Psychologist, Antichrist*, (New Jersey: Princeton University Press, 1974) p. 33

<sup>7</sup> Young Julian, *Nietzsche's Philosophy of Art*, (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1992) p. 28

Richard Wagner and Nietzsche had a complicated relationship, which has been the focus of several books. Nietzsche's work *Nietzsche Contra Wagner* criticizes Wagner's art as decadent and regressive.<sup>8</sup>

In his essay *Tolstoy or Dostoevsky: An Essay in Contrast*, George Steiner talks about Nietzsche's shift from admiring Wagner to condemning him as a representation of cultural collapse.<sup>9</sup>

In his book *The Tristan Chord: Wagner and Philosophy*, Bryan Magee examines how Nietzsche's early admiration for Wagner and later disappointment with him mirrors a more profound philosophical issue pertaining to the function of art in contemporary society.<sup>10</sup>

In his book, *Nietzsche: Life as Literature*, Alexander Nehamas analyzes the break as essential to Nietzsche's growth toward a more positive aesthetic and moral perspective.<sup>11</sup>

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<sup>8</sup> Friedrich Nietzsche, *Nietzsche: Contra Wagner*, (Edinburgh: T.N. Foulis books, 1911) p. 87

<sup>9</sup> George Steiner, *Tolstoy or Dostoevsky: An Essay in Contrast*, (London: Faber & Faber Ltd, 1960) p. 56

<sup>10</sup> Magee Bryan, *The Tristan Chord: Wagner and Philosophy*, (New York: Henry Holt Publications, 2001) p. 43

<sup>11</sup> Nehamas Alexander, *Nietzsche: Life as Literature*, (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1985) p. 40

In his later works, Nietzsche veered sharply away from Schopenhauerian metaphysics. In his book *Nietzsche and Philosophy*, Gilles Deleuze contends that Nietzsche's later works shift the emphasis of music from metaphysical truth to the will to power and life affirmation.<sup>12</sup>

In his book *Nietzsche: The Ethics of an Immoralist*, Peter Berkowitz interprets Nietzsche's later acceptance of clarity, sensuality, and vigor in music as a component of his overall existential and moral philosophy. The ability to resist nihilism is expressed via music.<sup>13</sup>

Daniel Came's edited book, *Nietzsche on Art and Life*, brings together diverse viewpoints on the development of Nietzsche's aesthetics in support of his optimistic view of reality, according to his statement.<sup>14</sup> The essays in it highlight music's crucial role in assisting people in facing hardship without resorting to deception. Another fascinating topic of study is how Nietzsche's musical philosophy has influenced theorists and composers.

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<sup>12</sup> Deleuze Gilles, *Nietzsche and Philosophy*, (New York: Columbia University Press, 1983) p. 77

<sup>13</sup> Peter Berkowitz, *Nietzsche: The Ethics of an Immoralist*, (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1995) p. 66

<sup>14</sup> Daniel Came, (Ed.), *Nietzsche on Art and Life*, (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2014) p. 27

Carl Dahlhaus discusses Nietzsche's role in discussions about the significance of instrumental music in his book, *The Idea of Absolute Music*.<sup>15</sup>

In his book *Beethoven after Napoleon*, Stephen Rumph talks about how Nietzsche's ideas impacted subsequent perspectives on Romanticism and musical structure.<sup>16</sup>

In his book *The Aesthetics of Music*, Roger Scruton takes issue with Nietzsche's excessively passionate interpretation of music but recognizes the profundity of his existential connection to the medium. According to Scruton, Nietzsche's idea of music foreshadows contemporary worries about the influence of music on cultural values and identity formation.<sup>17</sup>

In his book, *Philosophical Perspectives on Music*, Bowman offers a broad examination of music from philosophical perspectives, including Nietzsche's contributions. This book is a helpful secondary resource for learning about Nietzsche's aesthetic philosophy in

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<sup>15</sup> Carl Dahlhaus, *The Idea of Absolute Music*, (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1989) p. 41

<sup>16</sup> Stephen Rumph, *Beethoven after Napoleon*, (California: University of California Press, 2004) p. 57

<sup>17</sup> Roger Scruton, *The Aesthetics of Music*, (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1997) p. 24

connection to other philosophers of music since it places it in the context of more fundamental issues of musical meaning, moral impact, and existential meaning.<sup>18</sup>

In his book *Nietzsche: A Very Short Introduction*, Tanner Michael provided a thorough summary of Nietzsche's aesthetics, including his thoughts on music. From Nietzsche's transition from Wagnerian metaphysics to his later attacks on art, Tanner provides a clear explanation.<sup>19</sup>

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<sup>18</sup> Bowman Wayne, *Philosophical Perspectives on Music*, (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1998) p. 48

<sup>19</sup> Tanner Michael, *Nietzsche: A Very Short Introduction*, (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2000) p. 52

## CHAPTER TWO

### THE CONCEPTION OF MUSIC IN PHILOSOPHY

#### 2.1 A GENERAL CONCEPTION OF MUSIC

One of the earliest and most widely shared manifestations of human imagination is music. Music is universal in terms of geography, culture, and time, ranging from ancient tribal songs to modern symphonies and electronic pieces. It is a well-organized art form that appeals to the mind as well as the senses, not just a collection of sounds. Music has a profound impact on the fundamentals of human life, influencing how people communicate, identify themselves, and experience culture. We are compelled by the common idea of music to examine its essence, functions, philosophical foundations, cultural significance, and psychological impacts. Drawing from philosophy, aesthetics, psychology, and ethnomusicology, this essay offers a thorough examination of music as a human phenomenon in order to provide a comprehensive picture of what music is and its significance for humanity.<sup>1</sup>

Music is an integral part of human life, influencing our thoughts, feelings, culture, and sense of self throughout history. It has been incorporated into the most fundamental customs of cultures, its core has been tried to be captured by philosophers, and its

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<sup>1</sup> Hanslick Eduard, *On the Musically Beautiful*, (Trans. Geoffrey Payzant), (Indianapolis: Hackett Publishing, 1986) p. 66

impacts have been researched by psychologists. Music defies simple categorization because it is both logical and emotional, individual and communal, physical and spiritual. Thus, any broad view of music must take into account its universality, variety, and value. It is a deep form of human expression that reflects the complexity of life itself, not just sound organized in time. Music embodies the resonance of human emotion, the rhythm of culture, and the harmony of existence. It is an essential force that unites people throughout time and geography as well as an aesthetic pleasure.<sup>2</sup>

### **What Does Music Mean?**

The simplest definition of music is the systematic organization of sounds over time. Music has structure and meaning because it follows patterns of rhythm, melody, and harmony, unlike random noise. The basic components of musical composition are the traditional elements of rhythm, melody, harmony, timbre, and dynamics. Rhythm gives temporal order, melody provides identifiable sequences, harmony increases tonal complexity, timbre differentiates sounds, and dynamics regulates intensity.<sup>3</sup>

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<sup>2</sup> Scruton Roger, *The Aesthetics of Music*, (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1997) p. 35

<sup>3</sup> Adorno Theodor, *Introduction to the Sociology of Music*, (New York: Continuum, 1988) p.41

## 2. 1. 1 Philosophical Viewpoints of Music

Over the course of history, philosophers have tried to define the nature of music. Pythagoras and his disciples in ancient Greece stressed the mathematical basis of music, connecting musical harmony with the order of the cosmos. In *The Republic*, Plato argued that music should be regulated in schools since it has the potential to influence behavior and morals.<sup>4</sup> However, Aristotle understood that music has an ethical power, as well as the ability to bring about catharsis and recreation.

Immanuel Kant viewed music as a form of beautiful art in the modern era, but he also thought that it was the least intellectual because it appeals more to the senses than to logic. In contrast, in *The World as Will and Representation* (1818), Arthur Schopenhauer saw music as the highest of the arts, asserting that it directly expresses the inner essence of reality the "will" without the need for conceptual mediation<sup>5</sup>. Inspired by Schopenhauer, Friedrich Nietzsche extolled the Dionysian power of music in *The Birth of Tragedy* (1872), viewing it as the fundamental driving force behind the vibrancy of art.<sup>6</sup>

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<sup>4</sup> Plato, *Republic*, (Trans. Charles Reeve),( Indianapolis: Hackett Publishing, 2004) p. 54

<sup>5</sup> Arthur Schopenhauer, *The World as Will and Representation*, (New York: Dover Publications, 1969) p. 81

<sup>6</sup>Friedrich Nietzsche, *The Birth of Tragedy*, (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1999) p.78

The connection between music and society was examined by 20th-century thinkers like Theodor Adorno, who supported the independence of "serious" art music while denouncing the commodification of popular music. The question of whether the significance of music resides in its formal forms, cultural associations, or personal interpretation is still being discussed in modern music philosophy.

### **2. 1. 2 Music as Communication**

By conveying emotions and concepts that words cannot always adequately convey, music surpasses verbal language. Music transmits through feelings, moods, and environments, whereas language transmits via ideas. Because music is a "universal language" in that everyone, regardless of their native tongue, can comprehend and enjoy it together.

The role of music as a means of communication within societies has been examined by ethnomusicologists. For example, African drumming is frequently used as a means of ritual, storytelling, and communication, in addition to its entertainment value. In a similar vein, Gregorian hymns in medieval Europe expressed religious fervor and theological thought that went beyond the bounds of everyday language.<sup>7</sup>

Music interacts on several levels, including physical (affecting the heartbeat and brain waves), emotional (eliciting joy, sorrow, and nostalgia), and social (promoting solidarity

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<sup>7</sup> Davies Stephen, *Musical Meaning and Expression*, (London: Cornell University Press, 1994) p. 55

and a shared sense of identity). Music, unlike spoken language, permits ambiguity and openness, allowing for varied interpretations among listeners.

### **2.1.3 The Psychology of Music**

In terms of psychology, music has a significant impact on human cognition, emotion, and behavior. Neuroscientific studies have shown that listening to or playing music triggers many parts of the brain, including those involved in memory, emotion, and motor abilities. The treatment of depression, anxiety, autism, and even Alzheimer's disease has all benefited from the effective use of music therapy.

According to research in developmental psychology, babies react to music even before they learn to speak. Rhythmic patterns promote motor coordination, while lullabies calm infants. Music can boost concentration, regulate mood, and strengthen social ties in adults. Despite debate, the "Mozart effect" demonstrates the power of music to promote mental activity.<sup>8</sup> Music has a variety of psychological effects: it can inspire, motivate, relax, or entertain. Additionally, it helps people cope during difficult moments by providing them a feeling of solace and purpose.

### **2. 1. 4 Music's Cultural Notions**

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<sup>8</sup> Bowie Andrew, *Music, Philosophy, and Modernity*, (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2007) p. 50

Music cannot be thought of in isolation from its cultural setting. There are several ways that various cultures see music. Music is frequently thought of in the Western classical tradition as an independent art form that is appreciated for its aesthetic values. In contrast, music is included into daily life, rituals, and community events in many non-Western cultures.

For example, African ideas of music prioritize rhythm and communal participation. Music is a group activity that brings individuals together, not a solo performance. The raga system in Indian classical music gives a framework for expressing certain feelings and spiritual experiences in addition to a scale. Confucianism has shaped Chinese traditional music, which connects it to social harmony and moral development. Music's cultural relativity demonstrates that there is no one universally accepted definition.<sup>9</sup> Music is a living, breathing aspect of society that is influenced by its values, attitudes, and rituals.

## **2. 1. 5 Music and Emotion**

Music's capacity to elicit and convey feelings is, maybe, its most widely recognized role. Certain genres, instruments, or tunes are frequently linked by listeners with particular emotions. For example, a quick tempo is frequently associated with excitement, while a minor key is typically linked to sorrow.

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<sup>9</sup> Kivy Peter, *Introduction to a Philosophy of Music*, (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2002) p. 33

The question of whether music expresses "genuine" emotions or just imitates them is up for discussion among psychologists and philosophers. According to the "expression theory," music expresses the composer's feelings, while the "arousal theory" posits that music evokes emotions in the listener, irrespective of the composer's purpose.<sup>10</sup> No matter the theory, music is one of the most potent forms of art because of the undeniable link between it and emotion.

### **2. 1. 6 Music and Identity**

The development of individual and group identity depends heavily on music. Music is often used by individuals to communicate their values, lifestyle, and personality. One's cultural and social connections are distinguished by one's musical taste, which becomes a component of one's sense of self.

At a communal level, music functions as a symbol of group identity. Shared values and histories are represented through folk music, protest anthems, and national anthems. For example, spirituals in African American history served as both symbols of resilience and expressions of suffering. In a similar manner, Europe's nationalist music of the nineteenth century was instrumental in bringing people together around shared goals. Through genres like hip hop, rock, jazz, and electronic music, which each have their cultural importance, music continues to define identities in modern society.

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<sup>10</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 35

### **2. 1. 7 Music and Spirituality**

Music and religion have been inextricably linked throughout history. Sacred music has been used in nearly every tradition as a means of worship, prayer, and transcendence. Hymns and chants bring people closer to God in Christianity. Although the recitation of the Qur'an is not music in the Western sense, it has musical characteristics that encourage profound spiritual contemplation. Devotional hymns (bhajans) and mantras are used in Hinduism as means of establishing a divine relationship.<sup>11</sup>

Frequently, music acts as a bridge between the physical and the spiritual, facilitating experiences of transcendence. It evokes a sense of the sacred that words alone cannot accomplish, whether through gospel choirs, meditative chants, or native ritual music.

### **2. 1. 8 Music in Today's Society**

Music has grown into a worldwide business in the modern day. The way music is made, distributed, and consumed has changed due to technological advancements ranging from the phonograph to streaming services. Although this democratization has brought music to billions, it has also brought up issues of commercialization, cultural appropriation, and the decline of traditional authenticity.

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<sup>11</sup> Davies Stephen, *Musical Meaning and Expression*, (London: Cornell University Press, 1994) p. 59

However, modern music continues to develop, fusing genres and breaking cultural barriers. The boundless potential of human creativity is demonstrated by world music, fusion genres, and experimental works. Additionally, digital platforms enable users to customize their musical experiences, turning music into a constant friend in their daily lives.<sup>12</sup>

## **2.2 MUSIC FROM ARISTOTLE’S PERSPECTIVE**

Aristotle is one of the most methodical philosophers of antiquity, exploring nearly every aspect of the human experience, including politics, ethics, metaphysics, and art. Although frequently regarded as a topic for poets and performers, music was also given significant consideration in Aristotle's philosophy. Aristotle's account was more nuanced and complete, taking into consideration the educational, moral, emotional, and recreational functions of music, even though his teacher Plato had previously highlighted its ethical and political importance. Aristotle placed music inside the context of his overall theory of art and human flourishing (eudaimonia) in books like the *Politics* and *Poetics*. He saw music as more than just a fun pastime; it was also a potent tool for shaping the soul, fostering good behavior, and offering cathartic release.<sup>13</sup>

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<sup>12</sup> Bowie Andrew, *Music, Philosophy, and Modernity*, (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2007) p. 54

<sup>13</sup> Aristotle, *Poetics* Trans. Malcolm Heath, (London: Penguin Classics, 1996) p. 67

Aristotle's view on music begins with his overall theory of art, then moves on to his examination of its moral force, educational value, recreational purpose, and cathartic value. We can see how important music was to Aristotle's conception of both individual growth and social well-being by placing his thoughts within his philosophical framework. Aristotle's view of music is inextricably linked to his overall theory of politics, ethics, and human existence. To him, music was not a simple hobby but a powerful influence that molded character, fostered morality, offered relaxation, and fostered emotional stability through catharsis. It was a crucial component of schooling, a means of fostering individual and societal growth, and a factor in the flourishing existence of people and the community.<sup>14</sup>

Aristotle recognized the complexity and diverse functions of music, in contrast to Plato, who treated it with caution and stringent control. He recognized in music not only the potential for moral development but also the genuine joys of leisure and the therapeutic relief of catharsis. His well-rounded viewpoint shows a strong respect for the richness of music as both an art form and a necessary aspect of human life. As a result, Aristotle's view on music supports its continuing relevance: music is more than simply amusement; it is a formative influence in human life that promotes moral education, emotional well-being, and the development of a thriving community.

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<sup>14</sup> Aristotle, *Politics* (Trans. Carnes Lord), (Chicago\: University of Chicago Press, 1984) p. 54

### **2. 2. 1 Aristotle's General Theory of Art and Music**

The arts were viewed by Aristotle as forms of mimesis (imitation). Unlike Plato, who saw art as a simple imitation of outward appearances that was far from the truth, Aristotle saw imitation as a natural aspect of humanity and a source of learning and enjoyment. In the *Poetics*, he noted that humans are the most imitative of all living things and that they enjoy representations from an early age. Music also participates in mimesis, but it does so by imitating the "affections of the soul" rather than by replicating external things in the same way as painting or poetry.

Music, in Aristotle's view, is set apart from simple noise by its order, balance, and rhythm. These characteristics are indicative of human rationality and the innate desire for harmony to be beautiful. In this way, music plays a crucial role in the arts, serving as both a source of pleasure and a way to develop and express one's personality.<sup>15</sup>

### **2. 2. 2 The Moral Force of Music**

Aristotle's emphasis on the moral influence of music is one of his most notable contributions to the field. He contends in *Politics* (Book VIII) that music has a formative

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<sup>15</sup> Aristotle, *Poetics*, (Trans. Malcolm Heath, London: Penguin Classics, 1996) p. 69

effect on the moral character of people and society. According to him, melodies and rhythms replicate characteristics like rage, tenderness, bravery, and moderation. Repeated exposure to music fosters corresponding emotions in listeners and performers, which in turn molds their personalities.

As a result, depending on its format, music might promote either virtue or vice. For instance, immoral conduct may result from unbalanced or extreme forms of music, whereas noble and balanced tunes encourage courage and moderation. In this way, music acts as a moral teacher. Aristotle, in contrast to Plato, was less rigid. Plato attempted to outlaw certain musical forms and instruments in his ideal republic, but Aristotle acknowledged a broader variety of musical expressions as long as they were employed correctly.<sup>16</sup>

### **2. 2. 3 Music in Schools**

Aristotle saw education as a way to teach virtue and get people ready for a life of rationality and moderation. He split education into several components, including music, drawing, gymnastics, reading, and writing. In this sense, music was an essential element of a well-rounded education rather than just an embellishment.

Aristotle advised that children be taught music in order to learn appreciation and nurture the soul, rather than to become professional artists, which he linked to servile labor.

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<sup>16</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 73

Because young people are still developing their characters, he argued that they should be exposed to simple, uplifting music. They may experience more sophisticated or even emotionally charged forms later in life, once they have the maturity to value them without being corrupted<sup>17</sup>. Thus, for Aristotle, music education was about more than just developing technical proficiency; it was also about molding moral values, instilling moderation, and bringing reason and emotion into harmony.

#### **2. 2. 4 Music, Recreation, and the Development of Humanity**

Leisure (*scholē*) is not simply idleness in Aristotle's worldview, but rather a prerequisite for fostering the best aspects of human existence, such as the arts, contemplation, and friendship. Leisure is focused on pursuits done for their own sake, whereas labor meets real demands. According to Aristotle, music is a leisure activity since it offers enjoyment, relaxation, and cultural development.<sup>18</sup>

He maintained that leisure should be used for activities that are both enjoyable and worthwhile, and that music meets both criteria. People improve their emotional and moral talents through music, as well as unwind after a hard day's work. In this manner, music helps to create *eudaimonia*, the flourishing life that Aristotle believed to be the ultimate objective of humanity.

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<sup>17</sup> Aristotle, *Politics*, (Trans. Carnes Lord), (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1984) p. 58

<sup>18</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 63

### **2. 2. 5 Music and Catharsis**

The connection between Aristotle's viewpoint on music and catharsis is arguably the most discussed topic. Aristotle famously defined tragedy in the *Poetics* as bringing about the "catharsis of pity and fear. " Catharsis is frequently thought of as a process of emotional purification or clarification, even if its precise meaning is still up for debate. Aristotle expanded on this notion in *The Politics*, claiming that particular types of music elicit strong feelings that, when released, provide solace and equilibrium to the spirit.<sup>19</sup>

For instance, music that is passionate or ecstatic helps listeners to experience emotions in a regulated and secure environment, which results in a sort of psychological balance. This cathartic function shows that music has therapeutic value in addition to moral education. Music promotes mental health and stability by providing a regulated outlet for emotions.

### **2. 2. 6 The Relationship Between Music and the Government**

Aristotle viewed music as essential to the welfare of the city state and not just as an individualistic interest. Music has a direct effect on the virtues and vices of citizens because it influences personality. For this reason, according to Aristotle, the government should control music in schools in order to make sure that it promotes harmony and civic virtue.

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<sup>19</sup> Aristotle, *Poetics*, (Trans. Malcolm Heath, London: Penguin Classics, 1996) p. 70

Contrary to Plato, who enforced severe limitations, Aristotle recognized variety in musical practices. He made a distinction between music for education, music for pleasure, and music for catharsis, each of which has a unique function. He believed that a well-governed society should permit this diversity while making sure that music's dominant role promotes moral growth and social harmony.

### **2.3 RENÉ DESCARTES' PERSPECTIVE ON MUSIC**

René Descartes (1596–1650), a key figure in the history of philosophy, is best known for his contributions to mathematics, epistemology, and metaphysics. His well-known maxim, "I think, therefore I am," laid the groundwork for contemporary philosophy. However, in addition to his philosophical approach, Descartes also dabbled in the arts and sciences, such as music. *Compendium Musicae*, published in 1618, is a treatise that sheds light on his stance on music early in his intellectual life.

Descartes attempted to examine music in this book from the standpoint of a mathematician and philosopher, rather than from the viewpoint of a performing artist. His argument highlighted the psychological effects of music on the human mind, the mathematical and physical underpinnings of musical harmony, and the importance of proportion in musical aesthetics. According to Descartes, music is a phenomenon that follows rational laws as well as an aesthetic experience. Descartes' perspective on music examines his mathematical theory of harmony, his thoughts on the connection between

music and human emotions, his view of music as both a science and an art form, and the lasting impact of his musical thinking.

The dual nature of René Descartes' philosophy is reflected in his perspective on music, which balances the pursuit of logical, mathematical principles with the acceptance of the significance of sense and emotion in human existence. He portrayed music in his *Compendium Musicae* as a science of proportion, based on straightforward numerical relationships that produce harmony and beauty.<sup>20</sup> However, he also understood that music has the ability to sway emotions, providing both intellectual fulfillment and emotional movement and joy. As a result, music was considered by Descartes to be both a science and an art form. While also demonstrating the value of personal experience, it showcased reason's ability to discover universal laws. His thoughts about music represent a move away from the speculative metaphysics of earlier philosophers and toward a more empirical, psychological, and contemporary conception of the subject.

Descartes' philosophy of music, which is less well-known than his epistemological and metaphysical works, demonstrates his broader vision: a universe ruled by reason but also full of the richness of human life. In this way, Descartes's intellectual legacy is reflected in his music, which represents the fusion of reason and emotion, mathematics, and the arts.

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<sup>20</sup> René Descartes, *Compendium Musicae*, (Rome: American Institute of Musicology, 1961) p. 77

### **2. 3. 1 The Background of the Compendium Musicae**

During his time with the Dutch States Army, Descartes wrote his *Compendium Musicae* in 1618. Although it wasn't released until after his death in 1650, it was his debut writing. The treatise, which was written to his buddy Isaac Beeckman, demonstrates Descartes's early intellectual inclination toward mathematics and science.

The *Compendium* was intended to be a logical explanation of the fundamentals of music, not a guide for musicians or a purely aesthetic reflection. It considered music as a science rooted in numerical ratios and the physics of sound, but it also took into account how it affects people's feelings. By doing this, Descartes maintained a long tradition of using mathematics to approach music that extends back to Pythagoras and Boethius, while also establishing the groundwork for a more modern, mechanistic perspective on musical experience.<sup>21</sup>

### **2. 3. 2 Music as a Mathematical Representation of Proportion**

The idea that numerical proportion leads to harmony is fundamental to Descartes's stance on music. In accordance with the Pythagorean tradition, Descartes contended that consonance arises from simple numerical ratios between sounds, such as the octave (2:1),

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<sup>21</sup> Benjamin Wardhaugh, (ed.), *The Compendium Musicae of René Descartes*, (Turnhout: Brepols Books, 2014) p. 79

the fifth (3:2), and the fourth (4:3). When the ear perceives these ratios, they create a feeling of beauty and order.

The beauty of music, according to Descartes, was based on the rational organization of sound rather than being arbitrary. He believed that the human ear is naturally receptive to these ratios, which is why consonances are universally appealing while dissonances cause stress. As a result, music is a science of proportions whose principles may be examined with the same rigor as mathematics.<sup>22</sup> But Descartes broke from earlier theorists by placing a strong emphasis on perception. Although objective proportions are essential for harmony, the human mind's perception of these proportions also influences the experience of beauty in music. As a result, Descartes combined psychological understanding with mathematical accuracy.

### **2. 3. 3 Music and the Human Passions**

Descartes' later philosophical works, especially *The Passions of the Soul* (1649), expand upon his earlier musical thoughts by examining the connection between music and human emotion. He understood that music had the ability to stir the soul's passions and

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<sup>22</sup> Frédéric de Buzon, *Compendium of Music*, (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2015) p.52

emotions.<sup>23</sup>He noted in the Compendium that musical pleasure comes from the listener's capacity to foresee and identify proportional patterns.<sup>24</sup>Dissonances cause anticipation and emotional stress, which is released when consonance reappears, whereas consonances offer stability and pleasure. As a result, the rhythm of emotional life is reflected in the interaction of harmony and discord.

Descartes expanded on his theory of emotions in *The Passions of the Soul*, proposing that music affects the human body and soul by manipulating the "animal spirits" (minute fluids believed to act as a mediator between the body and the mind).<sup>25</sup>As a result, the tempo, tone, and harmony of certain musical movements could elicit joy, sorrow, bravery, or love. As a result, music evolved into a psychological art that may influence human experience, in addition to being a mathematical science.

### **2. 3. 4 The Art and Science of Music**

The speculative study of music was separated from its practical application by Descartes. Music is a science that explores the physics of sound and the mathematical principles of

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<sup>23</sup> René Descartes, *The Passions of Souls*, (Indianapolis: Hackett Publishing Company, 1989) p.71

<sup>24</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 74

<sup>25</sup> René Descartes, *The Passions of Souls*, (Indianapolis: Hackett Publishing Company, 1989) p. 75

harmony. Using these principles as an art, music creates pieces that have an impact on the listener's thoughts and feelings.

He cautioned against considering music to be merely mechanical computation. The skill of music lies in the manner in which these components are put together to thrill and move the audience, even though consonances may be mathematically explained. In this way, music is like rhetoric: it uses sound in a calculated manner to sway and influence, just as rhetoric uses words in a calculated manner to persuade. Music, in Descartes' view, was thus a harmony between intellect and emotion. While its foundation was based on the universal laws of proportion, it only came to life via its psychological and artistic effects on people.

## **2. 4 BOETHIUS'S THOUGHTS ON MUSIC**

The Roman philosopher and politician Anicius Manlius Severinus Boethius (ca. 480–524 CE) is known for his enormous effort to bring ancient Greek philosophy to the medieval world. Boethius, whose most well-known work, *The Consolation of Philosophy*, addresses metaphysical and ethical issues, also left a lasting legacy to the field of music philosophy. His treatise *De Institutione Musica* ("On the Fundamentals of Music") had a significant impact on Western music theory for about a thousand years and rose to prominence as the most significant work on music in the Middle Ages.

Boethius prioritized the mathematical underpinnings, cosmic order, ethical impact, and function of music in intellectual life in his philosophical ideology of music, rather than focusing on music as a performance or a compositional medium. He inherited a lot from Pythagoras and Plato, but he reinterpreted these ideas in the context of Roman and early Christianity. Boethius' theory of music includes his tripartite categorization of music, his mathematical and cosmological framework, his ethical and educational perspectives on music, and his impact on medieval philosophy.<sup>26</sup>

As expressed in *De Institutione Musica*, Boethius's music ideology paints a deep picture of music as a representation of cosmic order, a discipline of the mind, and a route to intellectual and moral perfection. His tripartite division of music into *musica mundana*, *musica humana*, and *musica instrumentalis* demonstrates the scope of his idea, connecting the harmony of the cosmos, the inner balance of the human person, and the art of performance into a single framework. Boethius placed music inside the logical framework of the liberal arts by rooting it in mathematics. He emphasized its role in developing virtuous character by highlighting its moral influence. He also emphasized the superiority of theoretical understanding by differentiating between the philosopher of music and the performer.<sup>27</sup>

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<sup>26</sup> Calvin Bower & Claude Palisca, *Anicius Manlius Severinus Boethius: Fundamentals of Music*, (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1989) p. 67

<sup>27</sup> Boethius, *De Institutione Musica*, (Venice: G. Scotus LTD, 1892) p. 87

Boethius's philosophy had a significant impact on mediaeval education, philosophy, and theology, making sure that music was seen as a key component of intellectual and spiritual life rather than just a form of amusement. Although contemporary sensibilities may criticize his disregard for practice and creativity, his vision serves as a potent reminder of music's potential to combine science, philosophy, and the quest for knowledge.

#### **2. 4. 1 The Philosophical Background of Boethius' Music**

Boethius lived during the transitional period between late antiquity and the early Middle Ages, a time when the Roman Empire had fallen in the West and Christianity was becoming more influential in shaping intellectual life. He saw himself as a transmitter of Greek philosophy to the Latin-speaking world, translating and modifying the writings of Aristotle, Porphyry, and other philosophers.

In Boethius's view, music was a liberal discipline (*musica*) that belonged to the quadrivium of sciences, along with arithmetic, geometry, and astronomy, rather than just an art of entertainment. Mathematics served as the basis for philosophical reasoning in these four fields. His handling of music is indicative of a larger philosophy that saw music as a rational, cosmic, and moral force rather than a useful skill.

#### **2. 4. 2 The Threefold Categorization of Music**

The most well-known element of Boethius's musical theory is his categorization of music into three groups:

### **1. Music of the Cosmos**

The inherent harmony of the cosmos is what this is all about. Boethius drew on Pythagorean cosmology to support his assertion that the same ratios that regulate musical consonances also regulate the motion of the stars, the shift of the seasons, and the equilibrium of the elements. This "music of the spheres," which is not audible in the strictest meaning of the word, demonstrates the logical structure of creation. Divine reason and providence are expressed in the harmony of the cosmos.

### **2. Musica Humana (The Music of the Human Being)**

This signifies the harmony between the body and soul, reason and passion, and the capabilities of the human individual. Similar to how proportion and balance rule the cosmos, the human being is a microcosm that must maintain internal harmony. This inner balance is represented and maintained by music.

### **3. Instrumental Music**

This is the real sound created by voices or instruments; it is the audible art of performance. Since this genre of music pertains to practical talent rather than theoretical

knowledge, Boethius considered it to be the lowest category. Even though it's significant, it only represents a shadow of the universe's and the soul's higher harmonies. Boethius' philosophy is demonstrated by this categorization: music is not only an art form but also an expression of cosmic harmony that permeates the entire world, from the sky to the human soul.

### **2. 4. 3 The Mathematics and Harmony of Music**

Music, according to Boethius, is fundamentally mathematical. He acquired the idea from the Pythagorean tradition that numerical ratios form the foundation of musical consonances, such as the octave (2:1), fifth (3:2), and fourth (4:3). He believed that these proportions demonstrated the logical architecture of reality.

To Boethius, learning music meant learning about the relationship between number and sound. As a result, he considered the real philosopher of music to be the one who considers the numerical principles behind harmony, as opposed to the performer who only plays by ear. Boethius believed that reason and reflection were more honorable than technical proficiency, and this distinction between theoretical and practical knowledge reflects that<sup>28</sup>.

### **2. 4. 4 The Moral and Educational Function of Music**

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<sup>28</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 59

Following in the footsteps of Plato and Aristotle, Boethius affirmed the moral impact of music. Since music mirrors the order of the cosmos, it may also influence human nature by fostering inner harmony. According to him, some rhythms and patterns can foster virtue, while others may promote vice.

Music became a focal point of education as a result of this conviction. Being trained in music, according to Boethius, meant being initiated into the rational order of the universe and the discipline of the soul, rather than merely acquiring artistic skills. As a result, music instruction was crucial to the development of moral and intelligent people. He cautioned against judging music purely on its enjoyment value. Though pleasure has some value, it degrades the soul when pursued without regard to order and virtue. If music is correctly understood, it should raise the mind toward what is true and good.

#### **2. 4. 5 Theology and Music**

Boethius' conception of music, as expressed in his musical works, is consistent with Christian cosmology, even if he is not strictly a theologian. The Christian perspective of the human being as an orderly image of God is reflected in the harmony of the soul (*musica humana*), while the harmony of the cosmos (*musica mundana*) may be seen as a representation of divine creation. Boethius' framework served as the foundation for integrating music into Christian theology by later medieval thinkers like Augustine and

Thomas Aquinas.<sup>29</sup> As a result, music acted as a link between the mathematical order of creation and the moral and spiritual life of the believer. In this way, Boethius' philosophy supported the notion that music is a holy discipline linked to divine wisdom, rather than a worldly indulgence.

#### **2. 4. 6 Boethius's Thoughts on Music Philosophy and Musicians**

Boethius makes a clear distinction between various types of musicians, which is a crucial component of his philosophy:

Performers (cantores): Those who use talent and practice to sing or play an instrument.

Composers (poetae): Those who create rhythms and tunes.

Theorists and Philosophers of Music (musicus): Those who comprehend the fundamental principles of harmony and are able to articulate the reasons for the effects of music.

The truest philosopher of music, according to Boethius, was the musicus, who was the best. The musicus considers the underlying principles of music, whereas performers and composers work at the level of practice. In this hierarchy, theory is superior to practice. His Platonic orientation, in which intellectual knowledge is superior to sensory experience, is evident in this elitist perspective. It also discusses the rationale behind the

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<sup>29</sup> Calvin Bower & Claude Palisca, *Anicius Manlius Severinus Boethius: Fundamentals of Music*, (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1989) p. 71

abundance of philosophical interpretation and numerical ratios in his writings, as opposed to performance techniques.

## **2.5 AUGUSTINE OF HIPPO'S IDEOLOGY OF MUSIC**

One of the most important characters in the history of early Christianity and Western philosophy was Aurelius Augustine (354–430 CE), who would later be known as Saint Augustine of Hippo. For hundreds of years, his writings, notably *Confessions*, *De Musica* ("On Music"), and *The City of God*, influenced medieval philosophy and Christian theology. In addition to being a theologian and philosopher, Augustine was an intellectual who was heavily involved in the liberal arts, such as music. He saw music as a means of comprehending order, numbers, and ultimately, God, rather than just an artistic endeavor. The integration of classical philosophy, Christian theology, and personal reflection is seen in Augustine's philosophy of music.<sup>30</sup>

Augustine saw music as a discipline of number and proportion that mirrored divine harmony, taking inspiration from the Pythagorean and Platonic traditions. Simultaneously, his Christian spirituality made him struggle with the conflict between the sensual pleasures of music and its function in raising the soul to God. Augustine's theory of music is explored in his *De Musica*, his musings in *Confessions*, and his integration of music into his overall theological perspective. Augustine of Hippo's theory of music is

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<sup>30</sup> Saint Augustine of Hippo, *De Musica: Libri Sex*, (Rome: Apud Guame Fratres, 1836) p. 68

characterized by both respect and skepticism. He portrayed music in *De Musica* as the science of number and rhythm, a logical subject that mirrors the divine order and teaches the soul to live in harmony. He admitted in *Confessions* that he had a personal battle with the emotional force of music, recognizing that it may elevate the spirit closer to God but also cautioning against the lure of sensual pleasure.<sup>31</sup>

Augustine saw music as more than just an artistic expression; when properly under the authority of truth, it was a spiritual reality, a representation of God's creation, and a way of worship. His perspective put music into the larger context of Christian philosophy: as a component of the order of creation, as a means for moral and spiritual development, and as a way for the soul to approach God. Augustine's contradictory idea of music, which both supported its sacred possibilities and protected against its misuse, kept his ideology at the center of the Christian philosophy of music throughout the Middle Ages. His legacy serves as a reminder of the dual purpose of music: to please the senses and uplift the spirit towards the divine.<sup>32</sup>

### **2. 5. 1 The Relationship between Music and Numbers**

Between 387 and 391 CE, Augustine wrote his early work, *De Musica*, which contains the most methodical treatment of music. This piece, which he wrote while switching from

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<sup>31</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 70

<sup>32</sup> Augustine of Hippo, *St. Augustine's De Musica: A Synopsis*, (London: Orthological Institute, 1949) p. 56

rhetoric to Christianity, shows him trying to combine classical philosophy with a Christian framework.

According to Augustine, music is included under the liberal arts (*artes liberales*), namely the quadrivium (arithmetic, geometry, music, and astronomy). In the Pythagorean and Platonic tradition, he prioritized treating music as the study of numerical ratios and rhythmic patterns over performance or composition. Music, in this respect, is essentially mathematical because it is based on the ratio and arrangement of sounds.<sup>33</sup>

Augustine's emphasis in *De Musica* is on numerical proportion, meter, and rhythm in poetry and music. He asserts that rhythm reflects the logical organization of the cosmos and the human spirit. The human mind learns to identify greater, timeless truths by thinking about numerical order in music. As a result, music is a logical science that mirrors God's order in creation rather than simply audible sound.

### **2. 5. 2 The Soul and Music**

According to Augustine, music has a profound impact on the human soul. From Plato, he acquired the notion that music has an impact on morality and personality. However, Augustine expanded upon this perspective by situating it within a Christian anthropology:

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<sup>33</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 61

the soul's harmony is contingent upon aligning with the divine order, and music acts as both a representation of and a support for this alignment.<sup>34</sup>

The inner rhythms of the spirit resonate with the rhythms of music. In the same way that a healthy body and soul need harmony to function, music mirrors and supports this harmony. Thus, studying and performing music involves helping to orient the soul towards God and virtue.

But Augustine remained wary. He understood that music has the power to entice the soul into extreme delight and also appeals to the senses. In his *Confessions*, this contradiction is most apparent.

### **2. 5. 3 Theology, Worship, and Music**

Even though he was ambivalent, Augustine didn't dismiss music in Christian practice. Conversely, he reaffirmed its worth when properly structured. According to Augustine, music should be a means of worship, prayer, and faith instruction. The psalms, for instance, represent the blending of musical beauty and divine truth, elevating the spirit to God while also conveying the full range of human emotions.

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<sup>34</sup> Martin Jacobsson, (ed.), Aurelius Augustinus, *De Musica Liber VI: A Critical Edition with a Translation and an Introduction*, (Stockholm: Almqvist & Wiksell International, 2002) p. 89

Augustine's theology of music is in line with his overall teaching on creation and order. Because God created the world through measure, number, and proportion, music reflects divine wisdom. By uniting the soul with the heavenly harmony, music enables people to engage in that divine order when it is used in worship, thereby bringing about change in the soul.<sup>35</sup>

Augustine made a distinction between the two uses of music, as a result:

Improper use: when one pursues music solely for enjoyment, apart from reality.

Appropriate application: when music is used to honor God and meditate on the divine order.

#### **2. 5. 4 Music as a Path to God**

In the end, Augustine's idea of music is a reflection of his metaphysics of number. He thought that numbers are timeless, immutable truths that reside in the divine mind. Humans rise from sensible realities to eternal truths by studying music as the science of number in time.

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<sup>35</sup> Augustine of Hippo, *St. Augustine's De Musica: A Synopsis*, (London: Orthological Institute, 1949) p. 59

In this manner, music serves as a ladder of ascent: from the rhythms of sound, the soul ascends to the harmony of reason, and from reason, it ascends to God, the source of all harmony and order. As a result, Augustine infused music with a spiritual and contemplative element that surpassed its utilitarian or aesthetic value.<sup>36</sup>

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<sup>36</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 65

## CHAPTER THREE

### CONCEPTUALIZING NIETZSCHE'S PHILOSOPHY OF MUSIC

#### 3.1 BIOGRAPHY OF FRIEDRICH NIETZSCHE

On October 15, 1844, Friedrich Wilhelm Nietzsche was born in Röcken, a little Prussian town (now Germany). Franziska Oehler, his mother, came from a very religious household, while Carl Ludwig Nietzsche, his father, was a Lutheran pastor. Nietzsche's father died in 1849, when he was only five years old, leaving his mother to care for him and his siblings. Nietzsche's mindset was severely impacted by this early loss, which was made worse by the death of his younger brother soon after, and which would later be reflected in his writings. his thoughts on the nature of suffering and the fragility of humanity.<sup>1</sup>

From an early age, Nietzsche excelled in school. He received a classical education in Latin and Greek at the renowned Schulpforta boarding school. During this time, he was introduced to Greek tragedy and philosophy, which sparked his lifelong interest in the Greeks, notably pre-Socratic philosophers like Heraclitus. Nietzsche began his theology and philology studies at the University of Bonn in 1864. Under Friedrich Wilhelm Ritschl's influence, he quickly gave up theology and moved towards classical philology.

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<sup>1</sup> Walter Kaufmann, *Nietzsche: Philosopher, Psychologist, Antichrist*, (New Jersey: Princeton University Press, 1974) p. 41.

Nietzsche was one of the youngest professors when, at the age of 24, in 1869, he was hired as professor of classical philology at the University of Basel. professors in Europe at the time.<sup>2</sup>

One of the most thought-provoking, enigmatic, and influential philosophers of the modern age is Friedrich Nietzsche. His writings cover a wide range of topics, including political theory, psychology, literature, philosophy, and cultural critique. Debates for over a century have been influenced by Nietzsche's revolutionary critique of traditional morality, religion, and metaphysics, which has made him both admired and contentious. his criticism of Christianity, his notion of the "will to power," his declaration of the "death of God," and his vision of the "Übermensch" (Overman) continue to be the center of intellectual debate today. Despite the fact that Nietzsche's life was somewhat brief and sad, his writings had a profound impact on the course of Western thought, affecting existentialism, postmodernism, literature, psychology, and even the arts.<sup>3</sup>

Despite experiencing solitude, sickness, and hardship during his lifetime, Friedrich Nietzsche's brilliance intellectual legacy is boundless. By questioning religious, moral, and philosophical certainties, his writings shook conventional Western ideas. Ideas such the demise of God, the will to power, and the Übermensch continue to elicit thought and

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<sup>2</sup> Rüdiger Safranski, *Nietzsche: A Philosophical Biography*, (New York: W. W. Norton & Company, New 2003) p. 53.

<sup>3</sup> Julian Young, *Friedrich Nietzsche: A Philosophical Biography*, (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2010) p. 67

stimulation. Despite being difficult to comprehend, his works have influenced existentialism, postmodernism, psychology, literature, and cultural theory. Nietzsche's philosophy is not only destructive; it is also profoundly creative, pushing people to face the abyss of nihilism and create new values. His life and works are an example of an unending quest for truth, vigor, and self-overcoming. Nietzsche continues to be a philosopher who challenges us to reevaluate the very basis of meaning and existence, more than a century after his passing.<sup>4</sup>

### **3.1.1 Basel Years and Sickness**

During his time in Basel (1869–1879), Nietzsche was intellectually productive but physically exhausted. For the remainder of his life, he was afflicted by serious health issues such as migraines, eye issues, and digestive disorders. In spite of his illness, Nietzsche established close relationships with well-known people like the historian Jacob Burckhardt and the composer Richard Wagner. During the 1870s, his relationship with Wagner was especially significant, but it eventually broke down. At first, Nietzsche was a fan of Wagner's music and his concept of cultural rebirth. But Nietzsche grew tired of Wagner's nationalism, religiousness, and increasing antisemitism. Nietzsche's later

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<sup>4</sup> Gilles Deleuze, *Nietzsche and Philosophy*, (New York: Columbia University Press, 2006) p. 44

writings documented their split, which represented his break with German romanticism and his quest for a more extreme philosophy.<sup>5</sup>

### **3.1.2 Breakdown and Subsequent Years**

Due to deteriorating health, Nietzsche left his teaching position in 1879 and spent the remainder of his life in solitude and traveling throughout Italy, Switzerland, and France. He concentrated on his writing while living off a small pension. He created his most significant pieces throughout this time, such as *On the Genealogy of Morality* (1887), *Beyond Good and Evil* (1886), and *Thus Spoke Zarathustra* (1883–1885). Nietzsche had a mental collapse in Turin in January 1889. He is said to have fallen to the ground, crying and hugging the horse he had seen being struck. Later, he was found to have a mental illness, which was historically linked to syphilis, but which modern scholars disagree with. Nietzsche's sanity never returned. Until his death in Weimar on August 25, 1900, he was looked after by his mother, and subsequently by his sister Elisabeth Förster Nietzsche.<sup>6</sup>

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<sup>5</sup> Richard Hollingdale, *Nietzsche: The Man and His Philosophy*, (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2001) p. 56

<sup>6</sup> Maudemarie Clark, *Nietzsche on Truth and Philosophy*, (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1991) p. 61

### 3.1.3 Friedrich Nietzsche's Main Writings

Nietzsche's works are written in a distinctive style that is often aphoristic, lyrical, and controversial. They defy logical analysis, which both enhances and complicates his legacy. The following are a few of his most important works:

Nietzsche's debut significant work, *The Birth of Tragedy out of the Spirit of Music*, which combines philosophy, philology, and aesthetics, was published in 1872. In this case, he presented the distinction between the Apollonian (order, rationality, form) and the Dionysian (chaos, passion, creativity), asserting that Greek tragedy attained its greatness by striking a balance between these two opposing forces. Nietzsche later distanced himself from the book's celebration of Wagner's music as a rebirth of the Dionysian spirit.<sup>7</sup> *Human, All Too Human* (1878): Nietzsche's thinking underwent a change at this time. It shows Nietzsche's shift toward Enlightenment rationalism, skepticism, and a rejection of Wagner's romanticism, and is dedicated to Voltaire. Its content places an emphasis on psychology, ethics, and a critique of metaphysics while being presented in aphorisms.

As a result, Nietzsche's best-known and most perplexing work is *Thus Spoke Zarathustra* (1883–1885), a philosophical tale that uses a quasi-biblical style. Nietzsche presents some of his core ideas in it, including the *Übermensch* as an ideal beyond humanity, the

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<sup>7</sup> Alexander Nehamas, *Nietzsche: Life as Literature*, (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1985) p. 57

notion of eternal recurrence, and the "death of God." Nietzsche's prophet-like character, Zarathustra, advocates for the transformation of human values and the conquest of nihilism.

*Beyond Good and Evil* (1886): This book builds upon the concepts presented in *Zarathustra* by criticizing earlier thinkers for adhering to rigid moral frameworks. Nietzsche promotes a "philosophy of the future" that transcends conventional binaries of good and evil, highlighting perspectivism the notion that all knowledge is constrained by interpretation and viewpoint. *On the Genealogy of Morality* (1887): In this book, one of Nietzsche's most methodical pieces, the history of moral values is explored. He makes a distinction between "master morality," which includes virtues like strength, vitality, and nobility, and "slave morality," which includes virtues like humility and meekness that arise from resentment.

### **3.1.4 Nietzsche's Influences**

The impact of Nietzsche is extensive and diverse, reaching into literature, psychology, politics, and the arts beyond philosophy. Nietzsche's influence on philosophy included the founding of existentialism, which served as an inspiration to thinkers such Jean-Paul Sartre, Albert Camus, and Martin Heidegger. His perspectivism foresaw postmodern truth critiques, impacting figures like Jacques Derrida, Michel Foucault, and Gilles

Deleuze. Nietzsche was viewed by Heidegger as a key character in the history of Western metaphysics.<sup>8</sup>

Nietzsche's concepts of individuation and archetypes were used by Carl Jung, while Sigmund Freud recognized Nietzsche as a forebearer in the study of the unconscious. Alfred Adler and other later psychologists were captivated by the notion of the will to power. Influence on Literature and the Arts: Nietzsche was as much a literary figure as he was a philosopher due to his aphoristic and poetic style. His concepts served as the basis for the writings of authors like Rainer Maria Rilke, Thomas Mann, and Hermann Hesse. Additionally, his themes had an impact on modernist literature, ranging from James Joyce to Franz Kafka. The intricate connection between Nietzsche's ideas and his art is seen in his complicated relationship with Wagner and in his own musical works.

In the 20th century, and notably during the Nazi government, Nietzsche's ideas were controversially abused. Elisabeth, his sister, carefully chose and twisted his unpublished works in accordance with nationalist and anti-Semitic concepts that Nietzsche himself refuted. Although meticulous research has since cleared up the distortion, this harmed his reputation for decades. Discussions about secularism, ethics, cultural criticism, and the meaning of life in a postreligious society still include Nietzsche today. His appeal to foster values is in line with discussions about identity, authenticity, and individual

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<sup>8</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 65

independence. His critique of mass culture and the herd mentality squarely addresses concerns about modern consumerism and social conformity.<sup>9</sup>

### **3.2 NIETZSCHE'S EARLY VISION OF ART AND LIFE**

Friedrich Nietzsche's initial philosophical perspective was influenced by his thoughts on art and its significance in human life. Nietzsche first concentrated on the existential significance of aesthetic experience, long before he became the radical critic of morality and religion that we remember him as today. Nietzsche shows that he was already struggling with culture, life, and suffering. For him, art was the greatest affirmation of existence, bringing together life's tragic elements with happiness, rather than mere amusement.<sup>10</sup>

His interest in philology grew out of his formal training in the field. Nietzsche, who was immersed in Greek literature and language, believed that the Greeks were role models for approaching life with honesty and imagination. Additionally, he met Richard Wagner in Leipzig, whose operas he saw as a rebirth of the Greek tragic spirit. Nietzsche's belief that art was essential to cultural revolution was supported by Wagner's integration of music, myth, and theater. Nietzsche wrote *The Birth of Tragedy* in part in honor of

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<sup>9</sup> Daniel Conway, *Nietzsche's Dangerous Game: Philosophy in the Twilight of the Idols*, (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1997) p. 35

<sup>10</sup> Friedrich Nietzsche, *The Birth of Tragedy*, (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2008) p. 52

Wagner and his music, portraying it as the continuation of tragedy's spirit, and their friendship served as an inspiration for the book. Nietzsche's early aesthetics were therefore shaped by two formative influences: the Greek heritage and Wagner's cultural goals.<sup>11</sup>

### **3.2.1 A Radical Debut: The Birth of Tragedy (1872)**

The first book by Nietzsche broke with the serious norms of philology. He provided a broad understanding of Greek society that combined cultural critique, mythology, and philosophy rather than a scientific investigation. Despite being seen by many as hypothetical, it included the seeds of his lifelong mission, to comprehend life aesthetically rather than morally or metaphysically. The contrast between the Apollonian and the Dionysian is at the heart of it. Nietzsche viewed tragedy as an expression of life's greatest conflicts, not merely as literature.

Named for Apollo, the Apollonian stands for form, clarity, and individuality. It prioritizes proportion and harmony in sculpture and epic poetry in the arts. It represents rationality, boundaries, and the dreamlike solace of illusion psychologically. The Dionysian: Named after Dionysus, the Dionysian represents mayhem, intoxication, and the loss of one's sense of self. Its manifestation in art is in dance and music, which bypass logic and

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<sup>11</sup> Julian Young, *Nietzsche's Philosophy of Art*, (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1992) p. 63

arouse basic impulses. In psychological terms, it mirrors rapture, suffering, and affirmation of life even in the face of ruin.

The Synthesis in Tragedy: Greek tragedy combined the Dionysian realization of chaos with the Apollonian veil of pictures. By turning tragedy into beauty, the Greeks embraced life via this synthesis. Nietzsche regarded tragedy as the highest art form because it directly addressed pain but turned it into something meaningful.

Nietzsche's stunning assertion in *The Birth of Tragedy* that "it is only as an aesthetic phenomenon that existence is justifiable" is an example of how art can justify life. and the globe is always just. He refuted all metaphysical solace, whether religious or philosophical, that minimized life's tragic reality. To him, life is intrinsically characterized by instability, hardship, and misery.<sup>12</sup> Nietzsche maintained that, rather than seeking escape, art enables people to accept and even celebrate the totality of life. In particular, tragedy converts misery into confirmation. In this sense, art is not a rational explanation or moral lesson, but rather a deep way of living with and appreciating the tragic nature of life.

Cultural Significance: Nietzsche's view of art was also cultural. He claimed in *The Birth of Tragedy* that modern Europe was declining, characterized by rationalism, scientific reductionism, and the demise of mythology. He attributed this decline to Socratic

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<sup>12</sup> Friedrich Nietzsche, *The Birth of Tragedy*, (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2008) p. 54

philosophy, which prioritized reason above instinct. Given this situation, Nietzsche put his faith in Wagner, whose music drama he thought may bring back the life-affirming essence of tragedy.<sup>13</sup> Nietzsche's early fervor for Wagner demonstrates how firmly he thought that art might influence not only individual lives but also the course of culture, even though he eventually broke with him. Wagner, in his view, was a possible cultural hero who could revive tragic wisdom and combat sterile rationalism.

Despite the fact that Nietzsche would later criticize its core concept, that life is aesthetically, not metaphysically, justified, persisted in *The Birth of Tragedy*. This realization served as a guiding principle in his thinking. His early aesthetics force us to reconsider the meaning of life, the function of suffering, and the ability of art to transform existence. Nietzsche's outlook remains relevant in a society that is still struggling with cultural fragmentation, technological rationalism, and nihilism. It teaches us that living genuinely means facing adversity with imagination, beauty, and affirmation rather than running away from it.<sup>14</sup>

### **3.3 MUSIC IN THE CONTEXT OF NIETZSCHE'S PHILOSOPHY**

Only a small number of philosophers have considered music as profoundly and intimately as Friedrich Nietzsche (1844–1900). Nietzsche was not only a philosopher; he was also a

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<sup>13</sup> Daniel Came, *Nietzsche on Art and Life*, (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2014) p. 41

<sup>14</sup> Michael Silk & John Paul Stern, *Nietzsche on Tragedy*, (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1981) p. 72

composer who was very involved with the world of music. This closeness is evident in his philosophical work in which he discusses music not just as an art form but as a deep manifestation of existence itself. Music was given a special place in Nietzsche's philosophy, ranging from his first book, *The Birth of Tragedy* (1872), to his subsequent thoughts on culture, psychology, and aesthetics. He believed that music, more than any other art form, has the ability to communicate the most profound truths about life, pain, and happiness.<sup>15</sup> From his earliest works to his last, music holds a prominent position in Nietzsche's philosophy. He considered music to be the most direct representation of the Dionysian spirit of life and situated its origins in tragedy.

Nietzsche originally viewed music as a philosophical language under Schopenhauer's influence, but he later changed his perspective to see it as a psychological and cultural force. His shifting perspective on the possibilities and risks of music is reflected in his own interactions with Wagner, which went from being initially ecstatic to becoming increasingly critical. Nietzsche viewed music as, above all else, inextricable from life itself. It highlights the tragic reality of life, but it also converts misery into joy and beauty. It is the expression of the desire for power, the creative energy that drives life. For Nietzsche, music was the ultimate affirmation of life, not simply an art form. His famous statement, "Without music, life would be a mistake," expresses not only a personal feeling but a philosophical belief: that music exposes the core. that music allows us to

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<sup>15</sup> Friedrich Nietzsche, *The Birth of Tragedy*, (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2008) p. 57

appreciate life in all its entirety. For this reason, Nietzsche's theory of music continues to resonate with philosophers as well as anybody else who wants to comprehend the essential function of art in human existence.<sup>16</sup>

### **3.3.1 Nietzsche's Intimate Relationship with Music**

Nietzsche was not only a theorist of music, but also a working musician. He wrote piano pieces, songs, and chamber works from his youth. Even though his music never gained widespread acclaim, it demonstrates how important it was to his emotional and intellectual well-being. "Life without music would be a mistake," Nietzsche formerly admitted. His belief that music is an integral aspect of human existence rather than a mere adjunct to it is highlighted by this frequently cited adage from *Twilight of the Idols*.<sup>17</sup> Nietzsche found more than just aesthetic enjoyment in music. It was a way for him to find solace during his regular bouts of sickness and loneliness, and it also served as a framework for pondering the nature of life itself, art, and philosophy. As a result, his engagement with music was inextricably linked to his larger philosophical endeavor.

Nietzsche claimed that the fusion of Dionysian music and Apollonian image gave rise to Greek tragedy. Tragedy is a fusion of music and image. The chorus represented the Dionysian aspect of joyful music and dance, conveying the oneness of being, while the

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<sup>16</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 62

<sup>17</sup> Daniel Conway, *Nietzsche's Dangerous Game: Philosophy in the Twilight of the Idols*, (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1997) p. 39

theatrical dialogue brought forth Apollonian style and clarity. The synthesis produced a unique artistic experience: the ability to face adversity and chaos, but turn it into something beautiful and meaningful via art. As a result, for Nietzsche, music was the catalyst for tragedy rather than simply its accompaniment. The very "birth of tragedy" came "out of the spirit of music".<sup>18</sup>

The Will to Power, Psychology, and Music: Nietzsche's understanding of music grew more psychological and existential as his philosophy developed. He proposed that music expresses the instincts and motives that drive human conduct. It is the embodiment of the basic desire for development, extension, and self-conquest, which is known as the "will to power." This explains why music has the potential to be both inspiring and harmful. It can liberate, stimulate creativity and vitality, but it can also entice, manipulate, and sap. According to Nietzsche, Wagner's music is an example of the latter: an art that overpowers the senses but promotes dependence and passivity rather than power. According to Nietzsche, the best kind of music would be that which fosters self-overcoming, happiness, and life affirmation. Rather than denying suffering, it would convert it into beauty and strength as a means of comfort.<sup>19</sup>

### **3.4 MUSICAL TASTE IN NIETZSCHE'S WORK**

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<sup>18</sup> Michael Silk & John Paul Stern, *Nietzsche on Tragedy*, (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1981) p. 72

<sup>19</sup> Philip Pothen, *Nietzsche and the Fate of Art*, (New York: Ashgate Company, 2002) p. 25

In addition to being a philosopher, Friedrich Nietzsche (1844–1900) was also a fervent cultural commentator and musician. Questions of musical taste were at the center of his thinking, from his earliest writings to his late polemics. Nietzsche never considered music to be a neutral or just ornamental art form. Rather, it was a deep manifestation of life itself, revealing, for good or bad, the well-being of people and cultures. As a result, his assessment of music had a strong philosophical impact since it reflected his worries about vitality, decadence, and the affirmation of existence. Nietzsche's musical preferences changed significantly throughout his career. As a young man, he worshipped Richard Wagner, seeing in his music dramas a rebirth of the tragic spirit of ancient Greece. But Nietzsche later made a clean break with Wagner, calling his music decadent, manipulative, and life-denying. Conversely, Nietzsche began to appreciate musicians like Georges Bizet, whose *Carmen* he lauded for its clarity, sensuality, and vigor. In addition to folk music and even basic dance melodies, his taste included classical traditions, particularly Mozart, Beethoven, and Schumann.

Nietzsche wrote piano pieces, choral works, and songs from an early age. Although his works did not endure, they show that music was for him not just an intellectual concept but also a real-world activity. His assertion from *Twilight of the Idols*, "Without music, life would be a mistake," expresses his belief that music is a necessity for life. Therefore, musical taste was not simply a matter of personal preference; it was related to issues of

health, vigor, and philosophy.<sup>20</sup> Nietzsche always saw musical taste as significant. It was inextricably linked to his worldview regarding life, health, and culture. His early Wagnerian fervor mirrored his hope for a cultural rebirth through music; his later disdain for Wagner mirrored his awareness of modern art's decadence and manipulation. He favored clarity, vitality, and affirmation, as shown by his love for Bizet, Mozart, and folk music. Nietzsche created a philosophy of art that was also a philosophy of life by reflecting on musical taste. Choosing music for him was like choosing a way of life: either joyous and life-affirming, or opulent and life-denying. Thus, his opinions on musical taste shed light on his deeper concerns with strength, weakness, and the potential of affirming existence. Nietzsche's observations are still pertinent today, prompting us to ask ourselves how our own musical preferences mirror our underlying views on life.<sup>21</sup>

### **3.4.1 Nietzsche's Diverse Musical Preferences**

Nietzsche's admiration for Bizet reflects a fundamental shift in philosophy. Carmen's Mediterranean characteristics clarity, rhythm, sensuality, and a zest for life were what he appreciated about her. Nietzsche saw Bizet's music as an example of a healthy, positive

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<sup>20</sup> Daniel Conway, *Nietzsche's Dangerous Game: Philosophy in the Twilight of the Idols*, (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1997) p. 42

<sup>21</sup> Daniel Came, *Nietzsche on Art and Life*, (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2014) p. 45

art that was free of the decadence and somberness he observed in Wagner. Musical preferences for Bizet demonstrated vitality and happiness as opposed to morbidity.

Nietzsche also loved classical composers, notably Mozart and Beethoven. For Nietzsche, Mozart's music was the epitome of Apollonian clarity because of its balance, grace, and fun-loving character. Particularly in his earlier compositions, Beethoven embodied a strong and life-affirming musical spirit. Nietzsche, however, was critical of late Beethoven, whom he thought was approaching the extreme subjectivity that he also disliked in Wagner. As a result, he approached even revered individuals with a critical eye when it came to their music. He always judged composers based on whether their work reflected power and vitality or weakness and decadence.<sup>22</sup>

Nietzsche's feelings for Schumann and Brahms were mixed. He appreciated Schumann's compassion but lamented his lack of strength. In the same way, he rejected Brahms as uninspired, viewing him as an extension of an exhausted tradition rather than a revolutionary force.

Folk Music and Dance: Nietzsche also strangely displayed affection for folk music and dance melodies. In his opinion, these straightforward forms embodied a spontaneous and instinctive energy. For Nietzsche, music that made people want to dance represented a form of innocence and a celebration of life. "I would believe only in a god who knows

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<sup>22</sup> Philip Pothen, *Nietzsche and the Fate of Art*, (New York: Ashgate Company, 2002) p. 31

how to dance," says Zarathustra in *Thus Spoke Zarathustra*. Thus, musical taste encompassed not just great art but also the fundamental rhythms, motions, and pleasures.

### **3.5 NIETZSCHE, WAGNER, AND THE CRISIS OF MUSIC**

Richard Wagner (1813–1883) and Friedrich Nietzsche (1844–1900) had one of the most contentious, theatrical, and philosophically influential intellectual relationships of the nineteenth century. The young philosopher and the elderly composer initially had a profound respect for one another, but their relationship slowly deteriorated into alienation and open debate. Nietzsche viewed the issue at hand as a serious cultural and philosophical "crisis of music," rather than simply a question of personal taste. Nietzsche saw music as the most profound manifestation of life, with the potential to either affirm or deny existence, rather than merely as amusement. At first, he thought Wagner was the contemporary musician who would bring back the tragic, Dionysian spirit to Western civilization. But as their friendship deteriorated, Nietzsche saw Wagner as a sign of decadence, using music to take advantage of flaws, emotion, and religiosity rather than to celebrate life. As a result, for Nietzsche, the crisis in music mirrored the larger crisis of modernity: the loss of vitality, the triumph of nihilism, and the necessity for a reevaluation of values.<sup>23</sup>

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<sup>23</sup> Friedrich Nietzsche, *The Case of Wagner: A Musician's Problem*, (Leipzig: C.G. Noumann, 1988) p. 64

The connection between Nietzsche and Wagner exemplifies a significant ideological battle rather than just a break in their personal relationship. Nietzsche's initial enthusiasm for Wagner saw him as the remedy for contemporary cultural weariness and the revival of tragedy. Wagner, however, proved to be the very sign of decadence that he had previously believed he was fighting against, as seen by his subsequent disillusionment. Nietzsche thought this reversal brought out a more fundamental problem with music: would art be a vehicle for life affirmation or for decline? The latter was represented by Wagner, with his mesmerizing theatricality. The former included Mozart, Bizet, and even straightforward dance music.<sup>24</sup> The crisis of music was, therefore, inextricably linked to the crisis of modern culture and the struggle to affirm life in the face of nihilism. Nietzsche's thoughts are still relevant now. He maintained that music is not an innocent hobby but rather a force that influences life, reveals cultural health, and reflects the most fundamental principles of being. The music crisis persists anywhere there is a chance that art will turn into an opiate of decadence rather than a reflection of life. As a parable of the stakes of musical taste and its relevance to philosophy and life, Nietzsche's conflict with Wagner continues.

### **3.5.1 Nietzsche's Initial Fervor for Wagner**

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<sup>24</sup> James Kohler, *Nietzsche and Wagner: A Lesson in Subjugation*, (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1998) p. 41

The Dionysian and the Birth of Tragedy: Nietzsche's *The Birth of Tragedy* (1872) portrays music as the primary art form that embodies the Dionysian aspect. Intoxication, ecstasy, and the integration of one's individuality into the unity of life are all part of being. Nietzsche believed that tragedy was the result of the interplay between the Apollonian (form, clarity, image) and the Dionysian (music, ecstasy, formlessness). Nietzsche now saw Wagner as the contemporary Dionysian artist. For him, Wagner's operas, notably *Tristan und Isolde* and *The Ring Cycle*, represented the resurgence of tragedy for the contemporary era. By reviving myth and passion, Wagner's music seemed to defy the Enlightenment's rationalism and the era's dry academicism.<sup>25</sup>

Nietzsche's early musical tastes were thus influenced by Wagner's model of cultural redemption. He thought that Wagner's groundbreaking music dramas might provide cultural therapy and help Europe recover from its descent into nihilism. Wagner, in the eyes of the young Nietzsche, was someone who could reunite philosophy, mythology, and art, bringing back the unity of culture that had once flourished in ancient Greece. In Nietzsche's mind at this point, the solution to the music catastrophe was Wagner. The real issue, though, was the spiritual weariness of European civilization, for which Wagner appeared to have the solution.<sup>26</sup>

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<sup>25</sup> Friedrich Nietzsche, *The Birth of Tragedy*, (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2008) p. 60

<sup>26</sup> Bryan Magee, *Aspects of Wagner*, (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1988) p. 66

### **3.5.2 The Crisis Arises: Nietzsche's Disillusionment**

Nietzsche's faith in Wagner started to wane by the middle of the 1870s for a number of reasons, including:

1. **Wagner's Conversion to Christianity:** Nietzsche was shocked by Wagner's growing use of Christian themes, especially in *Parsifal* (1882), which he considered to be decadent, moralistic, and life-denying.
2. **Theatricality and Manipulation:** Nietzsche eventually came to see Wagner's art as over the top, appealing to the senses in a way that intoxicated and manipulated rather than strengthened.
3. **Nationalism and anti-Semitism:** Nietzsche was alienated by Wagner's German nationalism and anti-Semitic leanings, which aimed for a more diverse view of culture.
4. **Psychological and Intellectual Gap:** Wagner grew more and more to be seen by Nietzsche as a barrier to his developing philosophy of life affirmation.

### **3.5.3 The Change in Nietzsche's Perspective: A Focus on Healthier Music**

Nietzsche looked for options that represented clarity, vitality, and life affirmation if Wagner stood for the degeneracy of contemporary music.

**The Mediterranean and Bizet Perfect:** Nietzsche saw in Georges Bizet's *Carmen* a remarkable contrast to Wagner. He commended Bizet's music for its Mediterranean

clarity, rhythm, sensuality, and lightness. Hearing Carmen made Nietzsche "a better philosopher, a better man," he said. Nietzsche saw in Bizet a music of health and sunlit energy, as opposed to Wagner's gloomy, marsh-like intoxication.

Nietzsche also went back to Mozart and early Beethoven, whose music he appreciated for its clarity, structure, and power: Mozart, Beethoven, and Classical Balance. Representing the Apollonian aspect of art, Mozart's playfulness and grace served to temper Dionysian passion. At least in his earlier compositions, Beethoven represented creative power and affirmation. Nietzsche, though, saw in late Beethoven an anticipation of Wagnerian decadence, which he described as tending toward subjectivity and excess.<sup>27</sup>

The Philosophy of Folk Music and Dance: Nietzsche's understanding of music encompassed more than just the fine arts. Additionally, he saw folk songs and simple dance music as genuine representations of joy and instinct. The capacity to dance represented life affirmation for Nietzsche. As Zarathustra put it, "I would only believe in a god who knows how to dance. " As a result, Nietzsche's shift in taste reflected his philosophy: instead of decadence, sentimentality, or manipulation, music should represent power, rhythm, and affirmation.

### **3.6 ARTHUR SCHOPENHAUER'S VIEW OF MUSIC AS METAPHYSICAL WILL**

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<sup>27</sup> Owen Lee, *Wagner: The Terrible Man and His Truthful Art*, (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1999) p. 70

Of Arthur Schopenhauer's numerous contributions to nineteenth-century philosophy, his theory of music has had the most enduring influence on aesthetics. He maintained in *The World as Will and Representation* that music is not simply another art form but the immediate manifestation of the metaphysical essence of reality: The Will. Music, unlike painting, sculpture, or poetry, expresses the Will itself while "representing" appearances. Music, according to Schopenhauer, was metaphysics brought to life via sound. His view of the Will, his hierarchy of the arts, his assertion that music has a special capacity for expressing metaphysical reality, and the ramifications of this idea are all covered in this essay.<sup>28</sup>

### **3.6.1 The Metaphysical Framework of Schopenhauer**

**The World as a Representation** The planet, according to Schopenhauer, can be divided into two categories: the world as representation (*Vorstellung*) and the world as Will (*Wille*). The term "the world as representation" describes how space, time, and causality arrange how things seem. Since it relies on human intellect, this is where all science and everyday experience belong. The Will is the "thing in itself" that lies beneath the surface

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<sup>28</sup> Arthur Schopenhauer, *The World as Will and Representation*, (Mainz: Kaufmann prints, 1819) p. 105

of the world: a blind, illogical impulse that makes up the core of all existence. Raw impulse, as seen in nature, organic life, and human desire, is what drives it rather than purpose. It manifests in human impulses and instincts directly. Schopenhauer's worldview is based on the pessimistic notion that the Will is infinite, inexorable, and the source of all pain.<sup>29</sup>

### **3.6.2 Art as the Objectification of the Will**

The Aesthetic Experience as a Means of Escape: The relentless pursuit of desire, fleeting pleasure, and boredom dominates everyday life. There is a short respite from art. We become "willless subjects of knowledge" during aesthetic contemplation by putting aside our individual desires. Following Plato, we view things as disinterested reflections of universal Ideas rather than seeing them as useful. Art therefore offers a break from the dictatorship of the Will.

Schopenhauer organized the arts according to how clearly they show the Will; (a) Architecture demonstrates it through gravity and stability, (b) Sculpture and painting express notions of form and beauty, (c) Poetry uses imagination to convey universal truths, (d) Tragedy, the futility of striving is revealed at the pinnacle of poetry. Music stands above all the others as a separate art form.

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<sup>29</sup> Dale Jacquette, Schopenhauer, *Philosophy and the Arts*, (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1996) p. 175

### 3.7 MUSIC BEYOND METAPHYSICS

In the history of aesthetics and philosophy, music has frequently been linked to metaphysical assertions. From Pythagoras' concept of a "harmony of the spheres" to Plato's notion that music influences the soul, to Schopenhauer's connection between music and the metaphysical. Thinkers have turned to music as a bridge to ultimate reality, in accordance with Nietzsche's view of music as the voice of Dionysian truth. However, there is growing debate in today's society about whether music even needs metaphysics. Is music best understood in terms of human, social, and experiential realities, or should it be seen as a representation of transcendent truths? Thinking about music beyond metaphysics entails questioning its meaning, operation, and importance without relying on speculative metaphysical underpinnings.<sup>30</sup>

For a long time, music has been viewed as having metaphysical weight, thought to expose ultimate truth, cosmic order, or the inner nature of reality. However, it is to comprehend the force of music without transcendence that one must go beyond metaphysics. The significance of music stems from its ability to affect human life by creating experiences, fostering communities, influencing identities, and changing emotions. The importance of music is not lessened by going beyond metaphysics; instead, it is placed in the fullness of actual experience. Music is not a metaphysical will, but

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<sup>30</sup> Jerrold Levinson, *Music, Art, and Metaphysics*, (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2011) p. 52

rather an embodied rhythm, shared song, and cultural production. It's a pulse of life rather than a voice of transcendence. From this viewpoint, the magic of music lies in its ability to increase the intensity, interconnectedness, and meaning of life, rather than in its access to esoteric metaphysical truths.<sup>31</sup>

### **3.7.1 Beyond the Basics of Metaphysics**

The Turn to Experience: When we stop asking what metaphysical truth music reveals and instead ask what it does in human life, a shift occurs. Music transforms into a lived experience as opposed to an abstract metaphysical language. This action echoes the sentiments of philosophers like John Dewey, who in *Art as Experience* highlighted the significance of art (including music) in enhancing daily life. Music is woven into the world rather than transcending it, enhancing and influencing how people perceive, feel, and interact with one another.

Sociology and Anthropology of Music: Anthropologists and sociologists emphasize the cultural rootedness of music. The function of music in community rituals, identity, and solidarity is emphasized by Émile Durkheim and subsequent writers. The great variety of musical behaviors is revealed by ethnomusicology, demonstrating that music cannot be reduced to universal metaphysical meanings but rather must be comprehended inside cultural contexts. Music is both a force in and a result of society.

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<sup>31</sup> Andrew Bowie, *Music, Philosophy, and Modernity*, (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2007) p. 75

Modern neuroscience and psychology use psychological and neuroscientific methods to study how music affects the mind, emotions, and physical well-being. The therapeutic potential, rhythm, memory, and neural reactions of music are all studied. These methods offer an explanation for the powerful effects of music without resorting to metaphysical conjecture. They see music as an embodied, affective experience that uses patterned sound to influence how people think and feel. Music is meaningful in its own abstract structures and motion, he argued, and does not reflect external objects or expose transcendental reality.<sup>32</sup> This "formalism" sees music as devoid of philosophical weight and bases its beauty on immanent musical relationships melody, harmony, and rhythm. Later aesthetics were influenced by Hanslick's methodology, which also foreshadowed the analytic philosophy of music, which typically ignores metaphysical assertions.<sup>33</sup>

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<sup>32</sup> Kenneth LaFave, *The Sound of Ontology: Music as a Model for Metaphysics*, (London: Lexington Books, 2017) p. 109

<sup>33</sup> Theodor Adorno, *Philosophy of New Music*, (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 2006) p. 34

## CHAPTER FOUR

### EVALUATION AND CONCLUSION

#### 4.1 EVALUATION

Friedrich Nietzsche's ideas on music are still among the most thought-provoking and impactful aspects of his philosophy. According to Nietzsche, music was a metaphysical power, a carrier of truth, and a vehicle for conveying the most profound urges of existence, not just an artistic expression. Nietzsche's early works, notably *The Birth of Tragedy*, heavily borrowed from Richard Wagner's music and Arthur Schopenhauer's metaphysics to promote a viewpoint of music as the greatest art form, one that delves into the essence of being beyond its superficial form. However, there is a change in Nietzsche's subsequent works: he moved away from Wagner, attacked metaphysical interpretations, and supported a more life-affirming perspective on music that is related to health, vigor, and style.

Nietzsche's theory of music is a complex and ever-changing concept. From his early embrace of music as the metaphysical art of the Dionysian, to his subsequent emphasis on music as a barometer of health and Nietzsche struggled with music in a way that no other thinker of his day did. His thinking is susceptible to charges of inconsistency, romantic excess, elitism, and reductionism, yet it also provides enduring insights, such as the realization of the existential power of music, the value of the Apollonian/Dionysian

divide in interpretation, the criticism of decadent art, and the assertion that music is a vital component of life.<sup>1</sup>

As a result, one must recognize both the strengths and shortcomings of Nietzsche's philosophy of music. Despite its lack of a formal aesthetic theory, it presents a powerful understanding of the function of music in the human experience. For Nietzsche, music is both intoxication and discipline, peril and redemption, illusion and affirmation. First and foremost, it is life itself, as heard in rhythm and melody.

### **The Birth of Tragedy: Nietzsche's Early Philosophy of Music**

Nietzsche's first and most well-known description of music is found in *The Birth of Tragedy out of the Spirit of Music* (1872), where he discusses the Apollonian and Dionysian. Nietzsche there distinguishes between two basic creative impulses: the Apollonian, which is characterized by order, form, individuation, clarity, and dream, and the Dionysian, which is characterized by chaos, intoxication, ecstasy, and the dissolution of individuality. Nietzsche believed that music, in its Dionysian core, was the earliest art, representing the basic unity of life and articulating the underlying "will" behind appearances.<sup>2</sup>

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<sup>1</sup> Georges Liébert, *Nietzsche and Music*, (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2004) p. 54

<sup>2</sup> Gilles Deleuze, *Nietzsche and Philosophy*, (New York: Columbia University Press, 1983) p. 68

Nietzsche claims that Greek tragedy combined these elements. Tragedy revealed the truth of existence, that life is suffering but nevertheless beautiful, by mixing Apollonian form (dialogue, imagery) with Dionysian music (chorus, rhythm, ecstasy). This redemptive role was made possible by music's Dionysian character.

Schopenhauer's Influence: Nietzsche's initial viewpoint was heavily influenced by Schopenhauer. According to Schopenhauer's *The World as Will and Representation*, music is the only art form that can perfectly convey the will, which is the blind, yearning core of reality, without being mediated by ideas. Nietzsche embraced this perspective, hailing music as a metaphysical art that offers immediate insight into the nature of life.

Wagner as Redeemer: Nietzsche saw Richard Wagner's operas at the time as a revival of ancient Greek tragedy. Nietzsche saw the possibility for revitalizing modern culture in Wagner's synthesis of music, theatre, and myth. Music was a cultural and existential force that had the potential to mend the divides of modernity rather than simply being amusement.

Transition: Nietzsche's disillusionment: By the middle of the 1870s, Nietzsche had become disenchanted with Schopenhauer and Wagner. He started to consider Wagner's music to be theatrical, overly sentimental, decadent, and indicative of a fall in culture. In addition, he considered Schopenhauer's metaphysics of will to be a manifestation of life-denying pessimism. Nietzsche moved away from music as a source of metaphysical

comfort in his books. He saw music, on the other hand, as a psychological and cultural occurrence that might either improve or degrade life.<sup>3</sup>

### **The Late Nietzsche's Philosophy of Music**

Music as an expression of life and health: Nietzsche's perspective on music shifted from metaphysics to a measure of vitality in his latter works. "Life would be a mistake without music," he famously stated in *Twilight of the Idols*. Styles of life are represented in music: some songs reflect health, strength, and affirmation; others reflect decay, weakness, and decadence. Nietzsche believed that Wagner's latter works demonstrated decline since they appealed to weakness by seducing the audience with excessive emotion and pathological intensity. In contrast, he lauded composers like Georges Bizet, whose *Carmen* he praised for its clarity, sensuality, and life-affirming rhythm.<sup>4</sup>

Music Beyond Metaphysics: Nietzsche viewed music as an art form that expresses moods, emotions, and rhythms of life rather than as a metaphysical language of the will. As a means of molding, enhancing, or disciplining the human being, music was a component of the "physiology of art." Although it was still deep, its depth lay in its ability to foster joy and strength rather than uncover metaphysical facts.

### **Demerit of Nietzsche's Philosophy of Music**

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<sup>3</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 71

<sup>4</sup> Walter Kaufmann, *Nietzsche: Philosopher, Psychologist, Antichrist*, (USA: Princeton University Press, 1987) p. 72

1. Inconsistency and Contradiction: A popular critique is that Nietzsche's theory of music is inconsistent. Music is a metaphysical reality in *The Birth of Tragedy*, but in subsequent pieces it is a physiological expression. His initial adoration for Wagner stands in stark contrast to his subsequent rebuke. Critics contend that this change undermines the coherence of Nietzsche's philosophy of music.

2. Romanticism and Subjectivity: Nietzsche's early promotion of music to the level of metaphysics is frequently seen as excessively romantic. Nietzsche ran the danger of overestimating the power of music and ignoring the significance of other art forms and intellectual endeavors by viewing it as the representation of the Dionysian essence of reality. Nietzsche continued to believe, even after abandoning metaphysics, that music captured "life," which is still hazy and subjective.

3. Elitism and Cultural Prejudice: Nietzsche's opinions on music are well-known for being elitist. He considers popular or religious music to be decadent or unimportant, but he elevates Greek tragedy and classical pieces. His denial of Wagner is based, in part, on cultural and personal prejudices. The issue that arises is whether Nietzsche's philosophy of music is applicable to everyone or if it is limited to a small repertoire.

4. Reductionism: Nietzsche has a tendency to limit music to representations of health or illness in his later works. This could lead to ignoring the technical, cultural, and historical aspects of music and oversimplifying its complexity. It is not always easy to categorize music as either life-affirming or life-denying.

## **Merit of Nietzsche's Philosophy of Music**

1. **Profound Appreciation of Music's Influence:** Nietzsche correctly identified the incredible power of music, even if there were detractors. Music interacts with emotion, rhythm, and the body in a way that pure representational arts do not. This immediacy is reflected in Nietzsche's explanation: music has existential value and influences how we view life rather than just being amusement.

2. **Using the Apollonian and Dionysian as Interpretive Instruments:** The Apollonian/Dionysian split continues to be a useful framework for comprehending artistic production. It highlights the conflict between order and chaos, structure and freedom, restraint and intoxication, not just in music. Between harmony and dissonance, rhythm and improvisation, this tension is felt in music. Nietzsche's categories continue to have an impact on psychology, aesthetics, and cultural theory.

3. **Nietzsche's subsequent critique of Wagner's decadence,** while contentious, displays a high level of awareness of the cultural component of music. Nietzsche emphasizes how art both mirrors and influences society by connecting music to health and decadence. His assertion that art should affirm life continues to be a potent antidote to nihilism and cultural stagnation.

4. **Reaffirming the Life-Enhancing Value of Music:** Nietzsche's assertion that "life would be a mistake without music" is not just rhetorical. It demonstrates his belief that music

enhances life by strengthening our emotions, linking us to rhythm, and affirming our vitality. Nietzsche views music as a force that enhances and celebrates life, in contrast to Schopenhauer, who views it as a means of escaping it.

5. Expecting Modern Perspectives: Later in his career, Nietzsche's physiological methodology foreshadowed contemporary understandings of music's function in psychology, neuroscience, and culture. Modern research supports the notion that music influences our social identity, brain chemistry, and emotions. Nietzsche's connection between music and health and energy was ahead of his time, implying that his philosophy, even if not methodical, provides lasting lessons.

### **Reconciling Nietzsche's Two Periods.**

It is possible to view Nietzsche's early and late perspectives as complementary phases rather than contradictions. Initially, Nietzsche found solace in Schopenhauer and Wagner and accepted music as the metaphysical reality. He later reinvented music as natural, physical, and cultural after overcoming metaphysics. The underlying conviction that music is extremely important because it touches the very essence of life is evident in both stages.

In this way, Nietzsche's philosophy of music may be seen as a shift from illusion to affirmation. In his early writings, Nietzsche sought a metaphysical rationale for existence

in music; in his later works, he discovered that music physiologically enhanced life. The idea that music is necessary for human life is the unifying thread.

## 4.2 RECOMMENDATIONS

One of the most debated and influential aspects of Nietzsche's philosophy is his theory of music. After considering the advantages and disadvantages of his stance, it is now time to offer philosophical and practical advice. These suggestions aim to both explain how Nietzsche's concepts might be used and provide ideas for how academics, musicians, and cultural reviewers might use them. can be used to further, improve, and question his philosophy in current settings. Despite its conflicts and changes, Nietzsche's theory of music offers a rich framework for considering the essence and function of art. Nietzsche continually regarded music as essential to human existence, from its metaphysical origins in *The Birth of Tragedy* to its physiological affirmations in his latter works. His philosophy's long-lasting benefits and drawbacks, such as romanticism, elitism, and inconsistency, are brought to light by its appraisal.<sup>5</sup>

The recommendations from this assessment emphasize the necessity to reconcile Nietzsche's stages, broaden his categories, and incorporate his insights into modern academic research, cultural criticism, and musical performance. Educators are urged to nurture life-affirming creativity, musicians to strike a balance between form and passion,

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<sup>5</sup> Friedrich Nietzsche, *The Birth of Tragedy*, (Leipzig: E. W. Fritsch Publication, 1873) p. 81

and researchers to expand Nietzsche's scope across cultures and disciplines. Ultimately, Nietzsche's philosophy of music asks us to live musically in order to experience life itself as a rhythm of discipline and pleasure, pain and affirmation, rather than just to study it. The challenge of interacting with Nietzsche in the future is to maintain this attitude while applying his ideas to the intricacies of contemporary culture.

#### **4. 2. 1 Philosophical Suggestions**

Reconciling Early and Later Nietzsche: A key difficulty lies in the seemingly contradictory nature of Nietzsche's early metaphysical account of music and his later physiological, life-affirming viewpoint. Instead of viewing these as contradictions, students and academics of Nietzsche should take a reconciliatory stance. One suggestion here is to see Nietzsche's theory of music as evolving from existential affirmation to metaphysical consolation. Rather than rejecting either stage, this method highlights the continuity in Nietzsche's focus on music as essential to human existence.

Extending the Apollonian/Dionysian Framework: If used too strictly, Nietzsche's distinction between Apollonian order and Dionysian chaos is still strong but runs the risk of being overly simplified. The advice is to see these categories as fluid metaphors rather than rigid contrasts. The contemporary aesthetic may extend the framework to encompass additional forms of creative expression, such as the technological, the digital, or the political. With this extension, Nietzsche's insights remain applicable in contemporary musical creation settings.

Incorporating Ethical Considerations: Although Nietzsche was opposed to moralism, his theory of music implicitly addresses ethical issues pertaining to well-being, vitality, decadence, and affirmation. These ethical ramifications should be brought into sharper focus in future philosophical discussions. What impact does music have on the development of our moral character? Does some music inspire fortitude, bravery, or joy, while other music encourages apathy or despair? These moral dilemmas are well addressed by Nietzsche's philosophy.

#### **4. 2. 2 Recommendations for Aesthetics and Art**

The Life Affirming Practice of Music: In his later philosophy, Nietzsche emphasizes the life affirming power of music. Instead of turning to nihilistic or just escapist forms, modern artists and composers may be inspired by this advice by writing music that celebrates life, embodiment, and joy. Rather than forsaking tragedy or suffering in music, this means making sure that art doesn't succumb to hopelessness. Musicians can be led by Nietzsche's concept of "saying Yes to life" to produce pieces that strike a balance between positivity and negativity.

The balance between form and intoxication: The Apollonian/Dionysian synthesis offers a useful advice for musicians: the most potent art is produced when discipline and structure are combined with liberty and enthusiasm. Instead of favoring just technical skill or unrestrained expressiveness, composers and musicians may strive for this balance.

According to Nietzsche's tragic insight, music that combines clarity and ecstasy has a greater impact on listeners.

Extension Nietzsche's primary focus was on Greek tragedy and the European classical tradition, which are outside the purview of the European Canon. Nietzsche's approach should be applied to other musical traditions, such as African drumming, Indian ragas, jazz improvisation, or electronic music, is a recommendation for today's musicians and critics. This kind of cross-cultural application may put Nietzsche's framework to the test, exposing both its universality and its constraints. Nietzsche's philosophy of music becomes more globally relevant as a result of this.

#### **4. 2. 3 Suggestions for Social and Cultural Change**

Applying Nietzsche to the Critique of Decadence in Popular Culture: Nietzsche's critique of Wagner's decadence serves as a template for analyzing modern popular music. Rather than rejecting mainstream culture outright, the suggestion is to analyze how various musical forms either support or detract from vitality. Is mass-produced pop music capable of expressing real power and communal joy, or does it promote passivity and uniformity? The categories used by Nietzsche are helpful for diagnosing culture.

The Cultivation of Vitality and Music Education: A further recommendation is geared towards music instruction. According to Nietzsche's philosophy, music should be taught

not just as a technical skill or historical knowledge, but as a formative practice that molds the human mind. Music education programs may place a greater emphasis on creativity, improvisation, and embodiment, prompting students to view music as a celebration of life rather than as a distinct subject.

Nietzsche's perspective of music as an expression of health or decadence may be used to contemporary social and political analysis. This is because Nietzsche saw music as an expression of health or decadence. For example, protest music could be viewed as Dionysian affirmation against oppression, while nationalist or propagandistic music could represent both vitality and danger. One suggestion here is to use Nietzsche's categories with discretion, taking into account the power of music to be both empowering and manipulative in society.

#### **4. 2. 4 Proposals for Further Research and Scholarship**

Nietzsche's physiological account of music encourages interdisciplinary study. Researchers should investigate the connections between Nietzsche's philosophy and current neuroscience, psychology, and anthropology of music. In what ways does music affect our emotions, physical wellbeing, or social connectedness? By examining the validity of Nietzschean philosophy in fresh contexts, interdisciplinary research of this kind may enhance it with empirical evidence.

Nietzsche's Eurocentric viewpoint leaves the question of how to compare his philosophy with non-Western aesthetic traditions unanswered. For instance, scholars could draw comparisons between Nietzsche's Dionysian music and African ritual drumming, or between the Apollonian urge and the forms of Indian classical raga. By comparing Nietzsche's works to other works, his relevance would be extended beyond the Western canon.

Wagner and Schopenhauer, critically reappraised: Further study should critically assess the impact of Wagner and Schopenhauer, as much of Nietzsche's early philosophy of music developed in conversation with them. It is recommended to view Nietzsche's rejection of Wagner as a philosophical shift rather than merely as a personal betrayal. This could provide a deeper insight into how Nietzsche's philosophy developed.

Application to Contemporary Music Philosophy: Nietzsche's theories continue to be influential but need to be revised in order to address current discussions in the philosophy of music. Researchers should investigate Nietzsche's applicability to subjects like algorithmic composition, digital music production, and the function of music in the media. Applying Nietzsche's critique of decadence to streaming culture and reinterpreting his life affirmation in light of today's musical diversity are among the recommendations.

#### **4.3 CONCLUSION**

In the concluding stages of this work, we must acknowledge the intensity of his commitment to the topic as well as the ambiguity that permeates his thinking. Nietzsche never stopped exploring the nature of music, from its early metaphysical exaltation in *The Birth of Tragedy* to its subsequent physiological and life-affirming conception. He struggled with music's role in the human experience. One of the core themes of his overall philosophy is his theory of music. In fact, Nietzsche himself stated that "without music, life would be a mistake," putting music at the center of his existential perspective.

Nietzsche viewed music as a metaphysical occurrence in his early works. He was heavily influenced by Schopenhauer, who saw music as the will's direct manifestation—the fundamental essence of reality that comes before representation. In the Apollonian-Dionysian framework, music performed the key Dionysian function by intoxicating the senses, breaking down individuality, and exposing the tragic reality of life. According to Nietzsche, Greek tragedy demonstrated this synthesis, in which music provided a redemptive perspective on life even in the midst of its suffering.

There are both strengths and weaknesses to this initial stage. Nietzsche's assertion that music exposes the reality of existence is, on the one hand, a compelling acknowledgement of its unrivaled profundity and intensity. The high metaphysical value he gave to music, however, runs the risk of romantic hyperbole. Treating music as a metaphysical key to existence may both exaggerate its importance and make it unintelligible to those who do not hold his Schopenhauerian worldview.

Nietzsche later rejected Schopenhauer's metaphysics and grew apart from Wagner, whom he had previously hailed as the contemporary renaissance of tragedy. Nietzsche, on the other hand, reimagined music in more realistic, physiological, and cultural contexts. He came to view music as the expression of wellness, energy, and fashion rather than the revelation of philosophical reality. A piece, a performance, or a genre can either celebrate life by giving it vigor and focus, or it can represent decadence by causing weakness and decay.

Nietzsche's assessment of Wagner as decadent directly conflicted with his love of Bizet's *Carmen*, which he lauded for its sensuality, rhythm, and clarity. Nietzsche's larger philosophical project to substitute metaphysical comfort for aesthetic affirmation, to see art as something other than its literal meaning, is demonstrated by the very act of judging music in this way. not as an escape from life but as its intensification. In this way, Nietzsche always linked music to life itself. However, there are a number of unresolved issues in the development of Nietzsche's philosophy of music. According to critics, Nietzsche seems inconsistent because he switches between metaphysical and physiological viewpoints. His opinions of decadence and vigor may seem arbitrary, as they are influenced by his tastes as much as by logical reasoning. By favoring classical European traditions while rejecting well-liked or religious music, his elitism restricts the universality of his assertions.

Nietzsche's philosophy of music is still a good subject for contemplation despite its inconsistencies. A number of lasting insights can be summarized. Firstly, he has an unrivaled grasp of the existential importance of music: it is not just a source of entertainment or adornment, but rather a potent instrument for influencing emotions, attitudes, and cultural vibrancy. Second, even if it is simplified, the Apollonian Dionysian divide gives a valuable interpretive framework for comprehending the contradictions between form and freedom, discipline and ecstasy in art. Third, the cultural significance of art is highlighted by Nietzsche's critique of decadence: music is never unbiased; rather, it reflects and has an impact on the well-being of people and communities. Last but not least, his declaration that music improves life emphasizes its function as a wellspring of joy, power, and innovation, bringing art into line with the larger goal of affirming life despite pain.

Nietzsche's musical philosophy has a lasting impact. Music is still a means of identity, protest, and community experience in today's digital and globalized society. Nietzsche's categories offer tools for examining how music in modern society supports or challenges vitality. His support of vitality pushes one to explore forms, while his suspicion of decadence prompts one to critically examine the consequences of the massive commodification of music. of works of art that actually improve life. Additionally, Nietzsche's physiological shift foreshadows current studies on the psychology and neuroscience of music, which reveals the profound influence of rhythm, melody, and

harmony on emotions and well-being. He laid the groundwork for modern theories of music therapy and cultural studies by focusing on vigor.

In the end, Nietzsche's philosophy of music demonstrates his belief that life and art are inextricably linked. Especially in music, existence is experienced, affirmed, and changed in a favored location. Nietzsche's views on music, whether he initially considered it the metaphysical key to life or later saw it as the physiological enhancer of life, all come together. on the same fact: music is essential. It links individuals to the rhythm of life itself, the depths of sorrow, and the heights of delight.

Last but not least, Nietzsche's philosophy of music is an open invitation rather than a closed one. It encourages us to consider the function of art in our lives, to determine what makes us stronger or weaker, to strike a balance between clarity and ecstasy, and to live musically. Nietzsche's philosophy of music implies that life, even if it is truly a tragedy, may still be danced, sang, and embraced. In this sense, music is a means of affirming life itself rather than simply a component of it.

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