

Richard Wagner – The Genius Mark Of A Simmering Brew Of Pursuits, Anxieties And Contrasts

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Abstract: Regardless of the artistic formula, of whether we are referring to classical theater or lyrical theater, the performer's status, with all its similarities and differences, remains the same. For the artist, it is important not only to have a deep understanding of the text/score, but also of the general context, both of the role itself inside and outside the work from which it originates, as well as of the author, the understanding of the historical moment to which it belongs, from which it is claimed, for deciphering their intentions and the message they tried, at the time of creation and looking towards posterity, to convey it publicly. In this paradigm, at some point, the personal encounter with creation and, by extension, with Richard Wagner's conception of creation constituted a moment of revelation transformed into fascination, a lesson that I tried to pass on. Because, like any genius, Richard Wagner aroused not only admiration or controversy, but above all passion. Knowing his life, turmoil, creation and peculiarities we all become part of the existence of the spirit that forever revolutionized one of the most complex and successful forms of art, lyrical theater.

Keywords: Wagner, genius, visionary, syncretism, drama, music

In the artistic equation, the most important aspect that a performer must follow when performing a role or piece of music is that of conveying the essence behind the piece they are performing, meaning a series of aspects related to the style it belongs to, the nature of the character they play, the exact moment of the action and, last but not least, the language in which it is performed.

Music expresses feelings, emotions, and to convey them, it doesn't necessarily require words. Instead, to express states, feelings, emotions, words need intonation. Thus, through intonation, each spoken phrase has its melody, its well-determined melodic pattern. The fact that a single word can be intoned in hundreds of ways, depending on the state of the person who utters it, the context in which it is spoken, the person (character) who utters it, shows us how vast the palette of colors available to us is!

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Following the same principle, the sung word can have hundreds of timbral colors, depending on the feelings or situations it has to express, depending on the emotions that cause it and the moment it is to be sung.

The greater a performer is, the more we will notice that they are not able to perform a phrase the same way twice. watching them, we will notice on the same phrase different timbral colors from one performance to another, their will to say/sing a certain phrase with a new intention, with a new color, all this under the imprint of the changes that the artist experiences, often even intentionally in their private life, day after day, simply living, deliberately putting themselves in certain situations, getting emotional, enriching their soul and thus acquiring a larger emotional reservoir from which, when needed, they can bring out, in turn, emotions.

A personal note

In my own career, I have had the opportunity to play the same role, Abigaille in Giuseppe Verdi's "Nabucco", more than 80 times. There even was a time, years in a row, when I was asked to interpret only this role. It was the perfect condition to cap myself, to become mechanical, to stop searching, thinking that I had already found all the answers. I remember having, at one point, three performances of "Nabucco" in one week. The biggest problem these shows gave me was the angst at the end of them, the fact that after each curtain fall, I was drained of inspiration, feeling that in order to perform the next one, I need to recharge with emotions. This recharge can mean a walk among flowers, a good book, a conversation with friends, a good movie, etc. Because the soul must be caressed so that, later, it can want to open itself.

During these many performances of "Nabucco", I also had the opportunity to play the role with different partners, to whom I had to react differently each time to the different way they delivered my lines. The same lines, even within the same direction, but where each of them said their line through their personal filter, through the spirit of their own vision of the role, and I had to react to each way my partner delivered a certain line appropriately and differently from the way I had uttered it two days before.

The colors in a performer's voice are like salt and pepper in food, and it is in these small and seemingly insignificant spices that lie the secret and beauty of our profession.

A basic condition for an interpretation that is as expressive and profound as possible is knowing the meaning of each word that the performer has to speak/sing, especially when they interpret roles in languages that they do not normally speak . Otherwise it's very difficult, even impossible to color your phrases, it just becomes a process of imitating exactly how another singer

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before you thought and executed that phrase and that is immediately felt and presents no interest to nobody.

It is very important to listen carefully to our predecessors and study their interpretations, to know the traditions, to discuss them, but always when we begin to study a role that we are going to perform on stage, we must do so with the score in front of our eyes, because, very often, they allow themselves various artistic licenses that are not found in the score and which, once memorized, will be very difficult to correct when we have to perform them ourselves, abiding by the score.

When we get to play those roles, we must not let ourselves be influenced by the performances of our predecessors, and in no case should we try to imitate them!

Of course, the text/score is the same, the body of the text and the music we have to perform is the same and must be respected, but we must pass everything through the filter of our personality and sensibility, of the knowledge we have accumulated up to that moment and allow ourselves to express ourselves with maximum power and liveliness, in our own version.

From that moment, we can only focus on the situations and feelings that our character must go through throughout the score, give life and color to it, involving to the fullest extent our talent, our vocal, physical, and emotional qualities and personal intelligence. For, as conductor Leopold Stokowski said, „ *A painter paints his pictures on canvas. But musicians paint their pictures on silence*”. Thus, in the original silence of the auditorium, it is the duty of the performers to vocally paint the sonorities as faithfully as possible.

The Encounter with Richard Wagner

In a solo career that began with light lyrical soprano roles, which gradually evolved from the bel canto of the roles created by Donizetti or Bellini to roles for a lyrical spinto soprano ("Tosca", Amelia from "Masquerade Ball"), reaching roles of dramatic coloratura (Abigaille from "Nabucco"), I had the special privilege of being guided in this gradual approach to the roles by a great Master, Riccardo Muti, who, otherwise, over time, also revealed to me some of the manners of getting the lyrical artist closer to the creation of Richard Wagner. The illustrious conductor was also the one who cultivated in me the importance of acquiring a healthy vocal technique, combined with that of the most correct pronunciation, which is reached after extremely painstaking work, paying attention to details, always looking to solve the challenges that each score might present. For the performer's mastery is based, above all, on self-knowledge, and this process never ends.

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Then, at some point, came the encounter with the lieder composed by Richard Wagner, and thus arose my fascination for this composer. The choice was by no means a random one because my interpretive affinities towards Wagner's works developed over time.

First of all, the fact that the five lieder that make up the series based on the verses of poet Mathilde Wesendonck are unique in their genre in Wagner's creation was what prompted me to know and deepen this dimension of his composition: chamber music. The romance between Richard Wagner and Mathilde Wesendonck, the important role her presence played in his life at the time of the creation of the opera "Tristan and Isolde" has often been the subject of research, but few have also looked at the series of lieder composed to lyrics written by Mathilde, a special and unique concession made by Wagner, being a known fact that he otherwise wrote his own lyrics and librettos for his music.

Second, in the interpretative approach, the technical difficulties raised by lieder scores often made it difficult to convey, as faithfully as possible, the world that Wagner intended to bring to life through his music. In general, the cause is the haste that denotes the process by which, not infrequently, the artist approaches a work, many being guided not by the score itself, but by the labels that their predecessors put on certain repertoires, genres, works, composers, what tempts and leads them to believe without researching, to assimilate them as such, thus falling into a grave error that perpetuates itself and becomes, dangerously and erroneously, a quasi-rule. It is the reason that made me understand and above all determined me to dismantle the general grounded concept that Richard Wagner's music is only played in forte, on force and in continuous tension. In his scores, we often encounter *piano* markings for singing. Thus, I understood the importance of reading and mastering in detail the indications that Wagner notes in the score, because these, put into practice as such, make it especially much easier to interpret and also, perhaps the more importantly, they make it possible to exalt the spirit of the works, in the way the composer intended.

Last but not least, another motivation was the discovery of the possible comparison between the similarities and resemblances of the five lieder with the works created by Wagner. Their score is extremely comprehensive and interesting, providing vast material for analysis and reflection by comparing the source (the lieder) with the final production (the operatic score).

The Argument for Wagner

Richard Wagner was not only the author of remarkable works, asserting himself from the very beginning as a poet and a playwright, writing his own librettos and lyrics for the music he composed, he was also a talented

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publicist and theoretician of musical theater, always gathering numerous of admirers and opponents around his name and creation. Admirers claimed that the musical theater must proceed in the future only according to the rules indicated by Wagner, others, conversely, claimed that his art would have no value, and his influences would even be harmful to the musical art.

His original, unique conception, which includes a vision of synthesis on art in general and on music in particular, remains, to this day, one of the most important ones in the 19th century, often stirring rivalries, polemics or, on the contrary, adhesion, admiration to the point of adoration¹.

His creation indeed provided a favorable ground for the most opposite appreciations, this, perhaps, also because the fields in which he created were as diverse as possible, and because his personality was torn by multiple contradictions. However, due to his bubbling energy in promoting his artistic principles and his ability to enliven the people around him, he had, from the very beginning, many admirers.

Wagner was one of the titans of Romanticism with the most lights and shadows, both a brilliant innovator, and an egocentric scorner of the "old forms". He introduced into the opera the concept of *Gesamtkunstwerk*, i.e. "complete work of art", combining musical drama with stage innovations and a particular emphasis on soloists (the famous Wagnerian declamation), being a pioneer of atonality and leitmotifs. His musical drama brought together all the arts in one performance, the complete performance, as a sublimated culmination of the evolution of musical dramaturgy from ancient Greek tragedy to the Romantic century.

Richard Wagner, a Portrait

His firm decision to become a musician led him to start studying music, since childhood, by copying great masterpieces signed by Beethoven, Bach, Handel, Mozart or Carl Maria von Weber, for which he had acquired a real cult.

During his teenage years, he displayed his talent, musical knowledge and compositional skills in school works: sonatas, polonaises, marches, lieder, overtures, tableaux inspired by Faust, even a symphony in C major. In parallel, he directed and wrote articles, essays that he published, thus proving early on his multiple talents.

The details of his biography are among the most well-known and researched, but it should be pointed out that his style, like the ideals of his aesthetics, follows an evolutionary path starting from certain qualities and skills acquired from an early age. Also, his ideas grow and bear fruit in a fertile

¹ Sometimes, turned into hatred, see the *The Case of Nietzsche*

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aesthetic ground following the path of his romantic contemporaries. It is that Stimmung or spirit of the times, whose prolific representative he turns out to have been, by virtue of the influences of programmatism and the philosophical ideas of Schopenhauer or Nietzsche, of the revolutionary spirit of fellow artists and their struggle to remove the "academicism of classical forms" which would lead to the establishment of a "new poetic era" through which the composer-poet tried and succeeded in broadening the horizon of his art, finding his fulfillment in the ideal of the "work of art of the future", namely the musical drama. Wagner repudiated the idea of "pure" (instrumental) music and decreed that it had no future, „ *only a dramatic action performed on the stage*”² could render the meaning of a symphony. Exemplifying the importance given to the word precisely by the fact that Beethoven himself, in the Ninth Symphony, was aware of this necessity, he built a true aesthetic program with unbeatable arguments in favor of the perfect symbiosis between Poetry and Music. „ *It is a common saying that Wagner's music is Beethoven's symphony in drama*”³. Of course, the reactions were not slow to appear. In 1854, Eduard Hanslick published the work "Vom Musikalisch Schönen/On the Musically Beautiful"⁴, book in which he demonstrated with the same type of arguments, as subjective and vehement as Wagner's, the fact that the musically beautiful is built from „ *sonorous forms in motion*”⁵, and music does not need extra-musical attributes to communicate content. Thus, "pure music" does not require a program to be able to express itself. Seen as an obvious attack on the ideas of contemporaries declared to be composers of programmatic music, the aesthetics of beauty divided those who followed the artistic phenomenon closely, composers, philosophers, people of culture into two factions: into anti-Wagnerians and pro-Wagnerians.

Wagnerian Poetics

In the three important volumes published around the fifth decade of the 19th century, "Art and Revolution", "The Work of Art of the Future", respectively "Opera and Drama", Wagner reached the peak of his publishing activity, through his writings assuming the role of educating the public to be able to understand his ideas, and he envisioned musical drama at the center of a vision of changing mentalities.

2 Richard Wagner, *Opera și drama*, Editura Muzicală, București, 1983, p. 206

3 Liviu Rusu, in the preface to the translation of *Opera și drama* de Richard Wagner, Editura Muzicală, București, 1983, p. 9

4https://books.google.ro/books/about/On_the_Musically_Beautiful.html?id=Zn501XwAkMoC&redir_esc=y.

5 Idem.

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In the book "Opera and Drama", Wagner contrasted the two terms, bringing rather subjective arguments in a pamphlet-like tone to the traditional opera viewed as a negation of musical drama. In its pages, the predominance of sound-music-area in opera is emphasized, while in musical drama, word-dramatic conflict-plot must dominate. In the aria of the traditional opera, purely musical beauty is reflected without taking into account the dramatic meaning of the word, which thus becomes only a pretext. In musical drama, the music interprets the meaning of the words through its specific expressive means. Thus, musical drama consists of a continuous dramatic unfolding, which justifies the necessity of the existence of an infinite melody, in contradiction with traditional opera, which is rigid in the convention of alternating numbers: arias, recitatives, choruses, etc.

Musical drama could be, in the utopian society imagined by Wagner, the performance that would lead to the formation of the strong and beautiful man, educated by art, and this could only be achieved through revolution. The beautiful man who understands and cultivates, as Nietzsche said, „ *the immense vault of beauty and goodness*”⁶ which is the new art form of the future, will be the initiator of the change of society: „ *The revolution will give him Strength, Art, Beauty*”⁷.

Music is a Woman”

An element considered of vital importance to the completion of the musical drama was the libretto, adapted from the original myth or legend by the composer himself, whose poetic talent is recognized. He believed that the connection between the poet-librettist and the composer had to be a very close one, so as not to fall into the "grotesque of certain genres of opera". The importance given to the dramatic action totally affected the form of the musical dramatic performance by the need to follow that red thread, its logic, so that, from the conventional composition of the opera, the recitative arias disappeared, the continuous dramatic flow ensuring the flow of the music, therefore a continuous, infinite melody contained in a symphonized speech. Thus, the vocal and melodic parameters also changed, the sung declamation taking the place of the virtuoso aria.

And if most of the philosophical ideas that animated Wagner before the year of the revolutions belonged to ancient times, to the thinkers of ancient Hellas and Germanic myths and legends, sustaining that revolutionary momentum that gave birth to his first immortal works, "Tannhäuser", "The

6 Liviu Rusu, in the preface to the translation of *Opera și drama* de Richard Wagner, Editura Muzicală, București, 1983, p. 18

7 Richard Wagner, *Arta și revoluția*, apud Iliuț, Vasile: *De la Wagner la contemporani*, volume I, Editura Muzicală, București, 1992, p. 21

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Flying Dutchman', 'Lohengrin' and, in 1852, the tetralogy "The Rhinegold", "Valkyrie", "Siegfried" and "Twilight of the Gods", gradually this revolutionary momentum subsided with the deepening of new readings such as Schopenhauer's, "The World as Will and Representation", a book that will have an immense influence on his future works „directing him to a pessimistic conception of the world and life, to an exalted romanticism [...] and, what is very important, it will permanently separate him from his revolutionary activity”⁸. These are the ideas that he deepened in "Tristan and Isolde" and which sonically transfigured into a masterpiece that profoundly shook the world of music, the result of his love for Mathilde Wesendonck.

Wagner thus embraced, along with Nietzsche, Schopenhauer's ideas about music. „It would be the purest, most immaterial, most general of the arts. It represents the whole reality, the essence of things, the principle of life itself, the will, the prototype, the Platonic ideas in their purity. Neither poetry nor the fine arts will be able to touch the vital core which vibrates and expresses the Dionysian spirit of music [...] but without poetry, pure music moves in the abstract, sterile”⁹.

He was exiled from Germany for his involvement in the Dresden uprising of May 1849. At first, he took refuge in Paris and then settled in Zurich where he spent the next decade of his life. Although unable to stage his works in his homeland, he managed to get his friends to continue doing so while he was in exile. He had already written "Rienzi", "The Flying Dutchman", "Tannhäuser" and "Lohengrin" before the political dissidence and was forced to leave before staging the latter. He left this to his good friend, Franz Liszt. During his exile, Wagner performed concerts in various cities, often presenting sections of his own works, to ensure that his music was heard, listened to, loved.

Zurich was a haven for many people seeking to escape the conflict and political turmoil that was occurring in Germany and the surrounding areas. It was a splendid location that flourished with life and became a social center of Europe during that time.

Wagner's work is divided by Wagnerian commentators ¹⁰ in two periods: the period of accumulation and preparation of ideas and mature works, carried out until the time of the bourgeois revolution in Dresden in 1848 and the period after 1848, the time of creative maturity, in which his musical masterpieces are born and ideas about musical drama come to fruition.

8 Doru Popovici, *Magicianul de la Bayreuth*, Editura Albatros, București, 1985, p. 77

9 Emanoil Ciomac, *Viața și opera lui Richard Wagner*, Editura Muzicală, București, 1969, p. 16

10 Like his biographer, Houston Steward Chamberlain, in the book *Richard Wagner*, published in 1895

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Often, in his writings, the association of poetry with the masculine spirit appears, music being associated with the principle of femininity, and from the union of the two artistic forces musical drama is born: „*Music is the woman who gives birth, the poet is the one who fertilizes it... Music is a woman. Woman means love, but a love that is welcoming and that, when it receives, gives itself fully. A woman becomes herself only when she abandons herself... A woman who does not love with this self-giving pride is a woman who does not love at all. And a woman who does not love at all is the most repulsive spectacle in the world*”¹¹.

The Wagnerian Originality

The fruit of the passion and unfulfilled love for Mathilde Wesendonck, as all who have analyzed his musical creation agree, "Tristan and Isolde" represents a turning point in his style. The musical drama is fulfilled in this masterpiece which reflects all the stages of the consolidation of this style through previous works. The conception of the total performance, of the musical drama finds its roots in the ancient tragedy, in which Richard Wagner saw a perfect symbiosis of the arts (syncretism) which he wanted to realize according to his ideal, his vision.

„[...] *Wagner dreamed of a temple for art, which he intended to promote as a substitute for religion. A total art, for all mankind, using the popular myth in which the flock can find themselves initiated and in solidarity with the revelation of their own soul*”¹². He finally fulfilled his dream in 1876 when, returning from exile in Germany, enjoying the support of many important figures of the time, including King Ludwig II of Bavaria, in Bayreuth, he managed to build, according to rules very precisely established by himself, the *Festspielhaus* Theater, where to this day only his works are performed and where, in August 1876, the uplifting music of the Wagnerian *Ring* sounded for the first time, during four evenings, which were crowned with a resounding success.

To fulfill his need for sonorities that would describe the grandeur of the worlds of his legendary heroes, Wagner sought to amplify the score for brass instruments in particular, imagining a new instrument that bears his name, the Wagner tuba. Also, the traditional overture was replaced by Wagner with the Prelude, concentrating and synthesizing the main themes, leitmotifs, atmosphere and character of the entire opera. Regarding the musical covering of the action, situations, characters or their inner life, the musical dramaturgy conceived by Wagner was based on a lot of melodic-rhythmic-harmonic

11 <https://www.britannica.com/biography/Richard-Wagner-German-composer>

12 Emanoil Ciomac, *Viața și opera lui Richard Wagner*, Editura Muzicală, București, 1967, p. 12

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motifs, with symbolic content and character, which the analysts called leitmotifs. All these represented a binder of the dramatic discourse, musically linking the drama through an expressive content both descriptive and symbolic-metaphorical.

„It is true that the music of the magician from Bayreuth has an incomparable seduction, a more physical, sensual seduction [...] It is a sound transposition of states of ecstasy, of rhythms with highs and lows, of desires reborn from their own ashes, of paroxysms, of realities and specifically erotic poetry”¹³.

The psychological effect of Wagner's music has given rise to lively and passionate polemics or objective, critical leanings of scientific analysis. But what exactly are the elements of Wagner's musical language that lead to the possibility of describing the Wagnerian style? *„First of all, speaking about the Wagnerian melody, in addition to the mentioned traits, the illustration and declamatory profile, the motif-symbolic charge, the arioso expressiveness, the analysts noted the arpeggiated illustration as a consequence of osmosis with the harmonic plane, the scale configurations, the accentuation of the chromaticisms. Regarding the vocal range of the songs, Wagner created a comfortable melody for the voices, in the middle register with support in the acute and a natural adaptation to the prosodic accents of the text”¹⁴.* The rhythm was also subordinated to the prosodic accents, putting them into the service of emphasizing the natural flow of the music in the symphonized speech, the metrics being framed in the traditional measures, with rare incursions of alternative measures. The most important parameter of Wagnerian thought is harmony and tonality.

In his work, *„Romantische Harmonik und ihre Krise in Wagner's Tristan”*, published in 1919, Ernst Kurth stated that *„Richard Wagner's harmonic style is not a denial of the principles of classical harmony, but just an intensification, an elevation to new powers of expression. Its strength rests on the tonal cadence”¹⁵*, a cadence which, however, is continuously delayed, through altered chords, seventh and ninth chords, secondary step functions, plagal sequences, through the use of relationships between thirds, all of which lead to what has been called extended tonality and, implicitly, to the intensification the tensions of the dramatic flow. The role of the melodic, passage, exchange, chromatic notes, but especially the delays, never resolved on a tonal center, is very important in characterizing Wagner's harmonic style.

13 Emanoil Ciomac, *Viața și opera lui Richard Wagner*, Editura Muzicală, București, 1967, p. 21

14 Vasile Iliuț, Ana Maria Călin, *O carte a stilurilor muzicale*, volumul II, Editura Muzicală, București, 2011, p. 102

15 Idem, p. 13

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The continuous modulation or, more specifically, the continuous modulatory inflections contribute to the strengthening of the idea of infinite melody, polytonality being present sometimes in a fleeting manner. The multiple melodic lines of the Wagnerian discourse that „*are weaved and unfolded complementary extending and completing in symphonism the expression of the voices with text*”¹⁶ gave the symphonic speech that tendency of polyphonization necessary to demonstrate the overcoming of the idea of accompanying, homophonic discourse present in the orchestration of the traditional opera. All these had repercussions on the sound architectures, starting from asymmetrical, free phrases to continuously developing sections.

The Wagnerian Matrix

In regard to the internal architecture of the musical drama, the forms adjust according to the needs of the dramatic unfolding, therefore freely in terms of the patterns established by tradition. Through all of these, Richard Wagner's work represents, both in terms of style and musical aesthetics, an essential contribution to the evolution of the dramatic performance, but also of the musical language of the 19th century, haloing the musical life of his contemporaries, as well as the evolution of musical creation of the 20th century in all musical genres. Considered to have a canonical value in the romantic century, Wagner's creation can be seen as a field of coordination and synthesis of musical traditions, which otherwise than in the field of the Wagnerian aesthetic-compositional conception would not have had the necessary premises and conditions to be encountered: the idea of pure instrumental music (symphony), the idea of dramatic performance.

For Wagner, the aesthetic-imaginary plane, his nostalgia (if it can be called that) was not for the golden age of the Viennese classical tradition, but a much more intense and profound one, for the primordial purity and archetypal essentiality of a mythological prehistory in its quality of genuine German origin. And on a conceptual-compositional level, given the intensity of his cultural nostalgia and pursuing the adequacy of the means to the expected theme and expression, he operated an intensification from the conceptual-structural interior of the harmonic constitution, outbidding through hyperchromatization both the morphological resistance of the traditional chordal structure and forcing it will metamorphose ("the Tristan chord"), as well as the tonality itself.

The operatic conception was amplified and intensified by "infusing" the principles of symphonic thought, the intonational-thematic process finding a hyperbolized form in the leitmotif system, a plurimorphic, although still

16 Vasile Iliuț, *De la Wagner la contemporani*, volumul I, Editura Muzicală, București, 1992, p. 104.

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organic, response to Beethoven's intonational-thematic monomorphism. The traditional constitutive elements of the opera genre lost their discrete and distinct character within the musical drama, the aria and the recitative merging into the concept of the monologue (as an emulation of the infinite melody). The division into scenes and acts became conventional, as the musical material was subjected to continuous (*durchführung*) elaboration (*entwicklung*), and the cumulative principle expressing the structural mutation from discrete thought to processual flow became the infinite melody¹⁷ (of harmony, of tonality, of form, of orchestration).

Thus, Wagner's intention was to homogenize the structural components through fluidization, a process that involved circumventing tonal monocentricity by multiplying intermediate tonal centers (the infinite melody of tonality), avoiding the traditional functional resolution of chords (the infinite melody of harmony), putting chordal resolution in the impossibility of being achieved other than elliptically (deviated), the internal dissolution of the vertical chordal structure by altering the constitutive steps with the major focus on revealing a linearity with elaborative potential of polyphonic substance (which Anton Bruckner will take up and develop in his symphonies) and , basically, the "melting" of differentiation (chordal-functional), of delimitation (of formal articulations) and of (tonal) stability into a "syncretic", fluid, intensely elaborative whole and with an equally intense avoidance of completion.

These proved to be the contents of a hyper-avant-garde thinking, oriented towards the search for new means and structural solutions emerging in Austro-German musical thought in the fifth and sixth decades of the 19th century.

The complex personality of the great composer Richard Wagner was and thus remains an inexhaustible source for both his followers and his opponents, who to this day continue to vehemently support their positions. However, his thinking was constructed as a semantic and value mirror placed in front of the artistic-musical reality with which he was contemporary, and the intense, vivid and even violent reactions did not take long to emerge in total conformity with Wagner's expectations, because even through virulent denial or ridicule, opponents solidified his position, anchored him deeper and deeper into the collective consciousness, and actively contributed to the dissemination of his thought over ever wider spaces, his creation having an overwhelming influence on the subsequent evolution of music.

17 This principle finds analogies in literature through the constitution of the "stream of consciousness" narrative discourse both by James Joyce (1882-1941) in the novel "Ulysses" (1922), and especially by Samuel Beckett (1906-1989) in the "Molloy" (1951) series of short stories.

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Consequently, composers such as Gustav Mahler, Anton Bruckner, Claude Debussy (at the beginning of his career), Arnold Schönberg, Richard Strauss ended up developing their musical work under the overwhelming influence of Wagner's creations.

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