MISE EN SCÈNE OF THE MUSIC DRAMA OF RICHARD WAGNER

by

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ABSTRACT

This paper is an interdisciplinary study involving the music dramas of German composer and musical theorist, Richard Wagner (1813-1883). This paper seeks to explore the significance of *mise en scène* in the dramatic realisation of the music dramas of Wagner. The hypothesis of this paper is that in order for the music drama of Richard Wagner to be realised in its fullest measure and authenticity, there must exist a union of the performance and mise en scène. The paper will look into the way the artistic content — music and drama — and its emotional and intellectual elements are expressed and communicated through mise en scène in the theatrical experience of Wagner's music drama. The organisation of the paper is as follows: the Prologue defines the term *music drama* as a distinct art form. Chapter 1 will talk about the theatrical experience of the music drama of Wagner and the position that mise en scène occupies in the communication process. In Chapter 2, the evolution of mise en scène in the context of Wagner's works will be traced. Chapter 3 will be a case study of a performance of Wagner's *Tristan und Isolde*, his representative work of the music drama genre.

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1 This term is used to describe the spatial environment on stage where music drama takes place. (French, "placing on stage")