

## **Transcript: Music for Mondrian, Part 1.**

### **Introduction:**

Welcome to the National Gallery of Ireland Podcast Series inspired by our temporary exhibition Mondrian. One of the creative arenas that has become intrinsically linked with Mondrian's work is that of music. Over the course of this exhibition, the gallery commissioned jazz musician Emily Conway to explore this facet of Mondrian's life and career. In this, the first of three episodes that are the outcome of that project, Emily considers Mondrian's development as an artist of the musical soundscapes that surrounded his work in Holland and Paris up to the early 1920s.

### **Emilie Conway:**

Hello, and welcome to Music for Mondrian. In this podcast I'm going to explore with you the soundscape surrounding Mondrian's work as music becomes more and more important to the artist, and indeed, I would go so far as to say, absolutely visible in his later canvases. Over my time, researching Mondrian, the last few months, he's become, for me a very sparkly artist. The first reason being his love of jazz, which, as a jazz vocal as myself, I can only say he was absolutely correct in loving. And the other reason is his philosophy, his optimism, this sparkles through his work, I think. I read early on that Mondrian believes that life is always right. He believed that life is full of obstacles, but these obstacles are realities that reveal the disequilibrium that has to be opposed, but constructively opposed, so as not to become similarly negative.

Now given that Mondrian lived through, pretty much lived through, two world wars and the Spanish flu, this could be no facile optimism. And as I say, my curiosity was piqued as to how somebody would develop, and live out this philosophy, this optimism. I should add that these are just my explorations, and there is a world of information and scholarship beyond what I touch on here in this podcast. And because I found it all so fascinating, I did put it together as notes on my website. So if you go to [emilieconway.ie](http://emilieconway.ie), and you look up Music for Mondrian, there is a page there that has the notes for this podcast if anybody would like to read a little more. And the other thing is that I also made a Spotify playlist, and it's called Music for Mondrian. You can find the link on my website or if you go to just Emilie Conway on Spotify, you'll find it there. I'm going to skip over the earlier part of Mondrian's life and go straight to the 1890s when he was already a pretty much established artist in Holland.

### **(Musical interlude)**

In the 1890s, Mondrian was producing paintings pretty much consistent with Dutch tradition in style, subject matter and form. The earliest Mondrian painting in the National Gallery exhibition, dates from 1895 and it is a small study of the Royal Wax candle factory in Amsterdam.

In it a premonition of his later work is detectable in how he blocks in colour and the dominating use of horizontals and verticals to divide the space. Set at the edge of the Boerenwetering canal, the blackened chimneys make a grid like reflection on the grey water. And these premonitions are evident throughout Mondrian's early work, I would say, but to all intents and purposes unconsciously so.

By contrast, if we go over to Paris in the 1890s, we encounter a singular chap, one Eric Satie, 6 years Mondrian's senior, and neither he nor his music were consistent with dominant Parisian trends or traditions. Eschewing the traditional view of composer, he instead wanted to be known simply as a phonometrician, one who works with and measures sound. Satie was against all excess exaggeration, ornamentation and melodrama, either in composition or in performance, anything that might smack of romanticism for him. All of this obscured the music. He was in fact really an early exponent of Joycean scrupulous meanness. His compositions are brief and often quite stark, almost like aphoristic statements of his harmonic and rhythmic explorations. Satie did not think a composer should take more time from his public than strictly necessary. And I'm just thinking Stravinsky has a quote that too many pieces of music finished too long after the end. Satie was not guilty of that. But he also diverged from his romantic colleagues in the titles that he gave his work. There was no poetry or references to nature and in fact, Eric Satie often made up the names of his compositions. And there is still a degree of head scratching going on over what exactly Gymnopédies or Gnossiennes, particularly Gnossiennes, what that might refer to. And in Gnossiennes there are no barlines or no time signature, the better to release the music as far as Eric Satie was concerned. But needless to say, in the Belle Epoque Paris, this unadorned and divergent approach was not exactly welcomed. So at this point, I'd recommend listening to Satie | Noriko Ogawa on the playlist. And I think that in these pieces, and particularly how Ogawa plays them, we can hear that essential sparseness and an angularity, also not unlike Thelonious Monk, that, to me, is sort of a musical anticipation of Mondrian's later paintings.

### **(Musical interlude)**

Something that began to become apparent and to fascinate me in my research around the soundscape surrounding Mondrian's work was the synchronicity and simultaneity of events and how they interrelate. The first example of this comes in 1909, if we think across from St. Petersburg to Amsterdam, to Vienna to Paris, it's a pivotal year, musically and artistically. In Amsterdam, Mondrian exhibited his illuminist paintings at

the Stedelijk Museum, and these paintings, such as *House in Sunlight*, were quite a departure from previous work with the use of much brighter colours and a pointillist style. In departing from the Dutch artists around him, Mondrian showed himself to be the most controversial artist of the exhibition. That same year, he joined the Dutch Theosophical Society, having been interested in the spiritual movement for some time. Now, rather than attempt to sum up this movement, led by Madame Blavatsky, and do it an injustice, I think I'll defer to some lines by our own Yeats, also a Blavatsky enthusiast, to give a sense of this spiritual movement. In the poem *Vacillation*, Yeats writes: "Between extremities man runs his course. A brand or flaming breath comes to destroy all those antinomies of day and night. The body calls a death, the heart remorse. But if this be true, what is joy?"

And since trees would become so important for Mondrian in working out his abstractionism, Yeats also wrote: "A tree there is that from its top most bow is half all glittering flame and half all green. Abandoned foliage moistened with the dew and half is half and yet is all the seen. And half and half consume what they renew".

There were many spiritual movements at the start of the 20th century. Theosophy, Swedenborgianism, Kabbalism, Rosicrucianism (of which our friend Satie was a member), Neo-paganism, political communism, anarchism, ultra-nationalism, and in the rest is noise. Alex Ross proposes that this was due to the sense of possibility and vitality at the turn of the century; a restlessness to break with the old classical forms and beliefs that led many, particularly artists, into the spiritual seeking. 1909 was also the year that Stravinsky was discovered. Diaghilev attended the performance of 'Feu d'Artifice' in St. Petersburg and was charmed. So much so that he brought dancers Vaslav Nijinsky, Ana Pavlova and Ida Rubenstein from the Imperial Theatre in St. Petersburg to the Chatelet Theatre in Paris to found the infamous Ballet Russes. And included in my playlist *Music for Mondrian* are some excerpts from the first ballet that Stravinsky wrote in Paris in 1910. The mesmerizing *Firebird*, which I would encourage everybody to listen to because that ballet is so beautiful.

Another artist who joined the Theosophical Society in 1909 was, another Russian, Kandinsky. Already sensitive to the connection between music and art, he wrote of the possibility of a new realm, in which musical experience is a matter not of sound, but of soul alone. From this point, begins the music of the future. And a good friend of his who was in Vienna and working on a similar quest to Satie, albeit going a little further, was Schoenberg. Schoenberg wanted to purify music of ornamentation, like Satie, but also the inherited meaning of tonality. Schoenberg wanted to create a new music in which the absolute logic of composition would become its pure expression. And in 1909 Schoenberg's *Opus 11*, three pieces for piano, particularly *Number Three*, is an example of where he dispenses entirely with a tonal means of organization, and in abandoning the use of a tonal centre, Schoenberg dissolves the structures from which Western music had derived its sense of shape and order for 400 years, no less. Thus sounded the emancipation of dissonance. If that wasn't shocking enough, which it was, and was

met with, no more than Satie, quite mixed reaction, also in Vienna, architect Adolph Loos manifested his attack on Art Nouveau's compulsion to cover everyday objects in wasteful ornament, by beginning construction on the Loos House, and the Loos house would turn out to be a modern building that would shock turn of the century Vienna. Around the same time, it's interesting that in Paris, the establishment that had so averted its gaze from Satie's ungainly antics, might have been turning a slightly less disapproving glance his direction. The *Jeunes Ravelites*, a group of musicians who followed Ravel, began to proclaim their preference for Satie's earlier work, reinforcing the idea that Satie had in fact been a precursor of Debussy. Now, Satie could surely have done with the money from this attention. But it wasn't in his nature to court popularity, and with not much more than a shrug of his shoulder, Satie carried on his quaint path with his own eccentric explorations.

It's an interesting response on Satie's behalf I think, when we consider it was a time when artists like Picasso and Dali had begun to grasp the concept of fame. And that cultivating a persona might serve not only their ego, but also advance their art. But for artists like Satie, and indeed Mondrian, this was not interesting and could only be an irritating distraction. Indeed, for all the artists I discussed here, Schoenberg, Satie and Mondrian, they share a similar attitude to what will turn out to be the revolutionary aspect of their work, viewing it very sort of unremarkably as the next logical step. Schoenberg would later write: "I am conscious of having broken through all the feathers of a bygone aesthetic". But he would also say: "I was a conservative forced to become a revolutionary, but what I did was neither revolution nor anarchy". Mondrian too would see his Neoplasticism as the next logical step from Cubism. But in 1909, Mondrian had yet to take the next logical step, which he realized when he attended an exhibition in 1910, showing early Cubist works by Picasso and Braque

### **(Musical interlude)**

Paris 1912. Taking the next logical step. Breaking off an engagement and abandoning a comfortable position as a fairly well respected Dutch landscape painter, in December 1911, Mondrian moved to Paris. He arrived before Christmas at the very peak of La Belle Epoque. Paris was a city at fever pitch of intellectual and artistic innovation, invention and experimentation, driven dizzy by all the hope and high mindedness of a new century, with glimpses of invincibility. Icarus was flying too close to the sun before spinning into the disillusionment and devastation that would come with World War One.

But in 1911 all was well, and Mondrian was going for his art; to be in the energy and activity of the Cubists. And this decision, though he would barely spend three years in Paris, would prove transformative for his work. In fact, we would probably never even know of Mondrian had he not taken this risk. I was lucky to catch the exhibition at the

National Gallery just before another lockdown closed it on Christmas Eve last. The exhibit beautifully shows how Mondrian's work leaps forward to engage and integrate the exciting new style of Cubism, even as it shows the artist finding his own way with this new language.

In a similar way to which Schoenberg picked his way through traditional harmony towards the dissolution of tonality, Mondrian's tree compositions trace a similar path through a gradual complete dissolution of the figurative towards pure abstraction. But Mondrian does Cubism Mondrian's way. Typical Cubist subjects were the still life or the human form, but Mondrian explores the style through the study of nature and man's new nature, the city. In contrast to the Cubists too, his compositions show no attempt to describe volume. His trees are flat and are void of natural dimensions, thereby erasing any trace of natural form. Also, at this time, like Kandinsky, he starts removing any trace of narrative from the titles of his work and starts calling them compositions. So, from a certain perspective, it could be said that Mondrian arrives at his abstraction through a deep study of nature.

### **(Musical interlude)**

The Paris 1913 season opens with a scandal, *Sacre, The Rite of Spring, Le Sacre du printemps*, ballet with Diaghilev's Ballet Russes, music by Stravinsky, Nijinsky's most adventurous and daring choreography to date, and equally daring stage designs and costumes by Nicolas Roerich. Shouts from the audience and praise, and protest, during the performance were so loud, the dancers could not hear the music, and Nijinsky had to hide in the wings calling out the steps. Ultimately, though, this was a scandal. Its affront of tradition, musical, dance and theatre paid off. Stravinsky's score transformed how composers thought about rhythm, structure and harmony. Nijinsky's choreography with its dominant parallel positions, not one turned out position and not one ballerina on point, shocked the ballet world, challenging its canon on classical ballet. This bombardment of the new, I would say, did much to open the ears in Paris to the later sounds of jazz, and also open the floor to modern dance. Given this musical earthquake, it is interesting, to me anyway, to learn that it is only when he comes to Paris, that Mondrian's ears open to music. Prior to that, I certainly find no evidence. Although to be fair, I also found very little evidence of there being a musical scene in Holland in the early 20th century, certainly none comparable to its art scene or comparable to the music scene of Paris and Vienna. So, by all accounts, it would seem that it is only in his 40s and in Paris that Mondrian shows any interest in music. He struck up a friendship with pianist composer, also Dutch, Jakob van Domselaer, who in fact travelled all the way to Paris to meet him. Van Domselaer was fascinated by the emerging horizontal vertical duality in Mondrian's work and its increasing abstraction and inspired particularly by his plus-minus compositions. Van Domselaer composed

Stijlu Proeven, which is Experiments in Style for piano. And I think it's very interesting to listen to van Domselaer's Stijl Proeven, I'd suggest while looking at Mondrian's Composition 10 in Black and White, which is also named Pier and Ocean. So, yes, I'd recommend having a listen to van Domselaer's Stijly Proeven, which were judged to be an early example of minimalism, and in the playlist, it's played by Kees Wieringa.

The balancing of dualities, as we see in the perpendicular intersections of Composition 10, the plus-minus of this painting, was becoming a central concern of Mondrian's work and his writings. He was at this time formulating his ideas that he would later share in an essay, The New Plastic in Painting. This particular painting won praise also from another Dutch artist, Theo Van Doesburg, who described it as a most spiritual impression, the impression of repose, the repose of the soul.

van Domselaer's piano suite represented the first attempt to apply De Stijl principles to music, but we will find out about De Stijl a little later on. With the outbreak of World War One in 1914, Mondrian found himself in neutral Holland unable to return to Paris. He remained there where he became part of a coterie of likeminded artists, including van Domselaer, Theo van Doesburg, van der Leek and others. Already by 1916, however, van Domselaer was falling out of favour with Mondrian, for lapsing into melody. Anyway, among these friends and artists, and in agreement with many of their ideas, Mondrian assimilated and processed the rich influences from his time in Paris.

1917: war, De Stijl, Parade, Surrealism, Cubism, jazz.

Another occasion of the synchronicities that I found so fascinating in this project occurs in the year 1917. 1917 turned out to be the bloodiest, one of the bloodiest years of World War One. It was also the year of the Russian Revolution. And yet against all this widespread death and destruction, it was also ironically a year of major musical and artistic developments. Going to Holland, a multidisciplinary group of Dutch artists, architects, designers, musicians, including Mondrian, founded the De Stijl art movement and journal. In the very first issue, Mondrian published his, 'The New Plastic in Painting', an essay that set out the ideas of the group. In it Mondrian wrote: "The new plastic idea we'll ignore the particulars of appearance, that is to say natural form and colour. On the contrary, it should find its expression in the abstraction of form and colour, that is to say in the straight line and clearly defined primary colour". De Stijl was a utopian art movement that believed that universalism could be achieved through abstraction, that kind of a reaching beyond the changing appearance of natural things to an immutable core of reality, a reality that was not so much a visible fact but an underlying spiritual vision.

Meanwhile, in Paris, the first Cubist work, Parade, a ballet choreographed by Massine, written by Jean Cocteau, music by Satie, costume and set design by Pablo Picasso and aided by the Italian futurist painter, Giacomo Balla, was presented at the Chatelet Theatre.

This ballet was so unusual that the eminent poet and critic, when he was writing the program notes, Apollinaire had to in fact make up a new word, Surrealism, to describe it, and he coined this word several years before it came into existence. The timing and subject matter of this ballet are both poignant, as war threatened to derail production several times, the central concern of this ballet is art's relevance. A group of circus performers struggle to attract an audience. So it's like the ballet asked the question in the middle of a war: "What can art do? How can art attract an audience? How should art respond?" And again, when we locate this in the invention of the gramophone, camera, the radio, we see these new inventions, essentially displacing traditional art forms and the ways of making and paying for art.

The other unusual thing about this ballet was that the music that Eric Satie wrote featured an unusual mixture of instruments including a saxophone, harp, a xylophone, a diaphone, bottles filled with varying amounts of water, and various noise making devices, including a typewriter and a revolver. This is totally consistent with what we know of Eric Satie as a phonometrician, but in 1917 it challenged what were war weary audiences.

So Eric Satie shows himself to be a pioneer on the uncomfortable edge of the new. But his unusual instrumentation does anticipate the intonarumori of the Italian writer and futurist of noise music which Mondrian would turn out to be such a fan of. The production was denounced by one Paris newspaper as "the demolition of our national values". But Stravinsky praised it for its opposition to the waves of Impressionism, with language that is firm, clear and without any connection to images. Inspiring no such Parisian indignation was the arrival of a different type of music, jazz. Jazz came to Paris in 1917, with the American soldiers coming to fight in the First World War. These soldiers were accompanied by military bands, including the 369th Infantry Regiment band comprising of 50 black soldier musicians, directed by celebrated Broadway, bandleader James Reese Europe. Europe was a gifted multi-instrumentalist and composer, as well as a tireless champion of African American music and musicians. Europe was also the bandleader for Vernon and Duke, or Vernon and Irene Castle, one of the most famous dance teams of the age, so he knew how to get people dancing. Fearless as soldiers, this army band got their name, the Harlem Hellfighters. Dominating in the battlefield, they also dominated in the concert halls. They played one concert and their booking was extended to a full eight weeks, bringing with them dances like the foxtrot, the two step, the one step. With new songs uncovered and freshly published by WC Handy, like Memphis Blues, St. Louis Blues, Beale Street Blues, they brought the ideals of the Harlem Renaissance to Paris. They took something back too. Reese Europe said: "I have come back from France more firmly convinced than ever that the Negroes should write Negro music. We have our own racial feeling and if we try to copy whites, we will make bad copies. We won France by playing music which was ours and not a pale imitation of others. If we are to develop in America we must develop along our own lines".

Author Jean Cocteau was enchanted by the new American sound, describing jazz as “an improvised catastrophe” and “a sonic cataclysm”. Just thought I'd say that in French there. This podcast has been very English language centric, why not?

In 1918, Mondrian was eager to return to Paris, but in 1918, he also contracted the Spanish flu, a pandemic that took more lives than the Great War itself. It's believed he caught the disease from his housemate and the symptoms continued for months. And I suppose, you know, we can draw parallels. The situation is not the same, but certainly there are parallels as what we're going through today. After viewing the Mondrian exhibition at the National Gallery in December, journalist Una Mullaly wrote in the Irish Times, “Viewing Mondrian’s work, which progressed brilliantly in post war Paris, it's natural to reflect on the artistic booms that emerge from disaster. How are we really to know that the roaring 20s were not only a release of creativity and hedonism emerging from the ending of the First World War, but also the end of their pandemic? Does such a golden era of creativity await, if the stifling forces of late stage capitalism can get out of the way? The echoes are pronounced”. Well, I'm not sure at this point what will happen. I'd certainly like to have an artistic boom, as I'm sure many of my friends would. But I think we're still in grappling mode. These pandemic days are so unprecedented.

In my case, in the absence of being able to collaborate live with my musicians, which is absolutely the great joy of my performance work, even properly for this project, I can say that I've been very thankful for this research. I feel following Mondrian into his world has brought me into the company of a host of wonderful artists and creatives at the beginning of the 20th century, as they came to terms with World War One and their pandemic, and how they refound or stayed connected to their art and the questions that they posed in their work. And at the same time, many of us can also identify with Schoenberg, who found it very difficult to write, if at all, during World War One, but we can be heartened by how he found his groove again afterwards. But let's go back to Paris, again at the end of World War One, when it would indeed begin to thrive again.

### **(Musical interlude)**

Return to Paris; Dadaism; Les Annes Folles.

When Mondrian could finally return to Paris in 1919, he was coming fully formed in terms of his artistic purpose, but it was a different Paris. It was a different world. The question, “What is art?” “Who was it for?”, though asked before the war, evoked very different responses after the war. An estimated 20 million people died in World War One, and subsequently a further estimated 50 million people died from the Spanish flu. So when we hear those figures, we get, I think, quite an unsettling sense of the scope of the trauma and tragedy that the world was grappling with, coming to terms with, around 1920.



In "The Rest is Noise", Alex Ross discusses the effect of war and art as saying, "feelings of hyper alertness, distance and emotional coldness often overcome the survivors of horrifying events. Just as the traumatized mind direct barriers against the influx of violent sensations, so do artists take refuge in unsentimental poses in order to protect the self from further damage". Certainly, there was a shift in the European mind, a turning away from luxurious mystical maximalist tendencies of turn of the century art.

Now I think we know we could see this already starting to happen with people like Satie. But among the many post war movements, including Dadaism, Surrealism, Cubism, Futurism, it seems to me that Dadaism seems to most fit this response. It was developed in reaction to World War One and the movement consisted of artists who rejected the logic, reason and aestheticism of modern capitalist society, instead expressing nonsense, irrationality and anti-bourgeois protest in their works. The art of the movements banned visual, literary and sound media, including collage, sound poetry, cut up writing and sculpture. Dadaist artists expressed their discontent toward the violent war and nationalism, despite the hardships and upheaval or indeed, perhaps because of them. Paris resumed its place at the centre of the artistic firmament, burning through the years of Les Annes Folles, the precocious hedonist and reckless roaring 20s, the Jazz Age. Writers again flooded the city. Our own James Joyce, on finishing Ulysses, was wandering around looking for a publisher. Ezra Pound was scribbling his notes of criticism in the margins of The Waste Land and sending it back to TS Eliot. Yeats and Hemingway were there. Artists Pablo Picasso, Max Ernst, Marcel Duchamp, all strolled the streets of the city that had again become their home. Mondrian, dabbling in Dadaism with his friend Theo van Doesburg, would call out to each other in greeting: "Dada Does", "Dada Piet!"

Mondrian was listening out for the Futurists; they were on to something. He wrote to van Doesburg in 1919, "I don't recall the name, the chief of the Futurists. In regard to form, it seems to be going the right direction. I have myself discovered something of form in writing and later, I'll try it and see if it works". The writing he was referring to, that he would later turned on to Theo van Doesburg was Les Grands Boulevards, which was a stream of conscious description of street life that has echoes of Ulysses. Let's give it a go here: (Noises) A multiplicity of sounds, interpenetrating, automobiles, buses, cars, cabs, people, lampposts, trees. All mixed against cafes, shops, offices, posters, display windows, a multiplicity of things, movement and standstill, diverse motion, movement in space and movement in time, manifold images and manifold thoughts. Les Grands Boulevards.

### **(Musical interlude)**

1921: Noise music versus serialism.

Shortly after penning his praise and pinning his hopes on the Futurists, Mondrian got to go to a concert to witness 23 of the mechanical noisemakers or Intonarumori, presented by the painter and composer Luigi Russolo. The cabinets that held the music, or the noisemaking, machines were painted red, yellow and blue, which would have appealed to Mondrian's palette. According to Luigi Russolo, who, interestingly enough was also a member of the Theosophical Society, "Musical art today is seeking the amalgamation of the most dissonant strange and strident sounds. We're moving towards sound noise, not only amid the clamour of cities, but also in the one sided countryside. The machine has created so many varieties and combinations of noises that the meagreness and monotony of pure musical sound can no longer arouse emotion in the hearer". Excited after the concert Mondrian wrote the essay, 'The Manifestation of Neoplasticism in Music and the Italian Futurists'. He wrote, "To achieve a more universal plastic, the new music must dare to create a new order of sounds and non sounds. Such a plastic is inconceivable without new techniques and new instruments". He also wrote, "The silence should not exist in the new music. It is a voice immediately filled by the listener's individuality. Even Schoenberg, despite his valuable contributions, fails to express purely the new spirit of music because he uses the silence in his piece for piano. The new spirit demands that one should always establish an image on weakened by time and music or space and painting".

Which was kind of tough on Schoenberg, because in 1921 he thought he was doing pretty well. He had just developed and written his first surrealist composition, in the prelude and Intermezzo of the suite for a piano, Opus Number 25. He wrote: (German). In Serialism Schoenberg believed he had finally developed a system to foster musical development, something which he had regretted to sacrifice in 12 tone composition and the atonal earlier work. But for Mondrian, it seemed Schoenberg was gone the way of van Domselaer. His music was not the vision of Neoplasticism. His essays do not reference Parade, but yet I have to think that the cacophonous collision of Cubist, Surrealist and indeed Futurist influences in the ballet Parade, and the achievements of the Ballet Russes with Nijinsky, must have contributed to his ideas of what might be possible outside of painting. He quickly followed his essay on the Italian Futurists and with 'Neoplasticism, Its Realization in Music and Future Theatre'. In it he lays out a Neoplastic vision for future performances that what I think harken today's immersive performance. He writes, "The hall will be completely different from the traditional concert hall. Neither a theatre nor a church, but a spatial construction satisfying all the demands of beauty and utility, matter and spirit. Compositions could be repeated, just as films are repeated in the cinema. Whatever was lacking could be compensated by Neoplastic paintings with long intermissions for the public to enjoy these paintings". He also imagined that, "When it became technically possible, these paintings could also appear as projected images". He also stipulated that "the electrical sound equipment would be invisible and conveniently placed", which would certainly be music to many performers and producers ears, tidy up those cables. And further in the future, yet another art is possible, an art situated between painting and music. So his thoughts are

prescient when we think of today's performance. When I read that I think of Brian Eno's recent 77 Million Paintings, which we had an Ireland there not so long ago, and I wonder what Mondrian would think of that.

And so there we will leave Mondrian for now. Musically pitting serialism against noise music. Yikes! What a battle! A cacophonous battle! Thankfully he moved outside of that fray when he discovered and fell in love with jazz, which will be the subject of the next podcast. I do hope you've enjoyed this one, and I hope you'll join me for the next one, part two of this three part series. Just a reminder that you can find the Spotify playlist under Music for Mondrian. It's available on my profile on Spotify and on my website emilieconway.ie and there you can also find some of the notes for this podcast. To close, I'm going to share with you a brief vocal musical idea that I'm working with, well, as soon as it's safe to meet up with my musicians again. Windmills were a frequent subject in Mondrian's earlier paintings and there was a beautiful one in the National Gallery's exhibition called 'Windmills in the Evening', which Mondrian painted in 1917. I was captivated by this painting. Ostensibly it's a worm's eye, opposite to bird's eye, I like that one, it's a worm's eye view of a mill against an evening sky. So from this low perspective, the mill is dark and towering and would threaten to dominate the painting, except behind it is a dazzling white lattice of light, as Mondrian catches the moment of an evening sun flashing through curving clouds. The mill's sails reach into the sky and you could imagine them cutting and dividing the space with black lines, while they turn in the mystical evening sky.

**(Singing)**

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