

## Pauline Oliveros Listening vs Hearing

You **hear** a sound. The waves register in your brain, you identify the harmonies, and hear the echoes ring out. But did you really listen? What did those sounds mean? What was the context? Did you hear the same thing as the person beside you? Do you have memories associated with these sounds? How do they make you feel?

This is what Pauline Oliveros thinks about when she hears a sound. This is the practice of deep listening. Deep listening stemmed from a trip Oliveros had into a cistern where it brought heightened awareness of sound. She believes that the ears hear, the brain listens and the body senses vibration to form the mysterious process of listening.

The process reminds me of meditation as it brings you to a place almost outside of your body. The process is somewhat 'spiritual' and provides a deeper connection to the sounds you are hearing. Music is so interesting because it is heard by our ears but completely perceived and understood by our brain. What one person hears, we hear the same thing acoustically but associate those sounds with completely different emotions, interpretations and experiences.

I decided to write a short poem of how I felt when listening to the end of the Ted Talk when Oliveros plays the piece and we are taken on a musical listening experience. These are my thoughts...

I hear the pitches loud and clear  
All of the sounds are all so near  
But what do they mean?  
It is nothing like I have seen

I remain engaged  
But my thoughts unchanged  
I can't seem to understand  
It all seems so bland

But then I am taken away  
My mind goes astray  
Involved in the experience of sound  
A happy place I have found

When I listen to music this is how I feel  
All worries gone, my problems heal  
But this piece has no form  
Trying to identify, trying to brainstorm

I feel confused  
Questioning yet amused  
It is important to listen with care

It is not just enough to stare  
Music is a beautiful language  
Unspoken yet so much is understood