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Reading Music Through Literature: Introduction

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In 1982 Steven Paul Scher identified three general categories to help us understand the rich connections between music and literature.[1] "Music in literature," which included the literary "imitation . . . of the acoustic quality of music," adaptations of "larger musical structures and patterns and the application of certain musical techniques and devices" in literary works, and "literary presentation . . . of existing or fictitious musical compositions,"[2] has been expanded in recent years to encompass a whole manner of ways in which the implications of how music is represented in literature might be understood; discussions of gender, genre, structure, the nature of creativity, the cultural significance of musical instruments, aesthetics of criticism, and authorial proclivities have all contributed to a rich debate,[3] representative of the "high-quality synergetic interactions" that interdisciplinary studies offer.[4] Scher's two remaining categories, however, were music-centered: "music and literature" (primarily the setting of text), and "literature in music" – broadly related to concepts of musical narrative, where literary paratexts might help us to understand the nature and sequence of specific musical events. Growing numbers of studies in these areas continue to assert interdisciplinary promise, particularly where the nature of the literary text in question suggests a distinctive analytical or interpretative methodology.[5] Given the significant potential of this approach, this special issue, an outgrowth of the 2014 conferences "Words About Music" at Monash University, and "Music Literature, Historiography and Aesthetics" at the Institute of Musical Research in London (convened by the Universities of Monash and Leeds), explores further possibilities of how our understanding of specific musical works might be productively revised or enhanced by viewing them through the lens of literary models, works, or allusions.

Building on Lawrence Kramer's suggestion that "a song . . . is a reading, in the critical as well as the performative sense of the term,"[6] we might explore how all types of

musical representations of literature might be seen more overtly as critical interpretations of their texts. Susan Youens has interpreted Schubert's "Der Einsame" as a "pointed critique" of Karl Lappe's poem, for example, part of a "partial détente" that typically represents the composer-poet relationship – "born from the need to say 'No' to something in the poet's proposition and from the challenge of creating multiple levels of musical commentary on the text."[7] However, this can be developed further, engaging where pertinent with literary debates as part of a text's reception history, and in particular, considering how selected literary criticism of a writer and their works (not just the specific texts themselves) might be appropriated in searching for a suitable hermeneutic approach to any musical refiguring. Not only can this help to reassess "problematic" or relatively marginalized musical works as well as offering new insights into familiar repertoire, but it can be applied to various manifestations of the music-text relationship. In terms of text setting, for example, competing aesthetics of the ballad have been used to highlight the musical uncanny in Schubert's "Erlkönig," and musical readings by Parry and Elgar of Tennyson's poem "The Lotos-Eaters" have been explored overtly as contributions to the debate over the poem's didactic or aesthetic status in literary scholarship.[8]

A similar interdisciplinary frame might be used to interrogate text-music relationships in other musical genres, however. Developing James Hepokoski's familiar concept of the contract between composer and listener in defining program music to encompass what the listener "finds" rather than what they are "given," for example,[9] the first article in this issue explores how the listener might "grapple" with the "connections"[10] suggested by the juxtaposition of musical text and paratext in Granville Bantock's 1902 orchestral poem, The Witch of Atlas, based on a poem by Shelley of 1820. Whilst Bantock's inclusion of an abridged paratext in his published score offers a useful way in to appreciating his orchestral refiguring, literary scholarship in particular can be identified as a site of meaningful

interpretative strategies that might be applied to aspects of the music; these include issues of genre (the specific concept of mythopoesis), the central idea of transformation in the poem, and Shelley's awareness of the visual perspective. The resultant close reading has implications for both literary scholarship and musicology: not only can Bantock's reading be seen as a contribution to the poem's reception and meaning, but the study also confirms Bantock's significance in the development of program music – as a composer willing to experiment with musical structure to take account of the implications of his poetic models.

The issue of "voice" has been at the center of a wide range of studies in music and literature, whether in terms of tensions between natural and studied music-making of literary characters, broader representation of female vocality (including the voice being silenced or marginalized), structural concerns, or exploration of national cultures;[11] if overviews of contemporary music have adopted the concept of the decomposing voice to explore issues of human and inhuman sonorities,[12] the field of opera studies has encouraged the placing of voice at the heart of concepts of narrativity, aesthetics, and cultural, sexual and performing identities.[13] It is this potential of voice in an operatic context that is reinforced by Jason D'Aoust's article. After a brief discussion of Massenet's opera Werther in relation to other operatic versions of Goethe's novel The Sorrows of Young Werther, D'Aoust focuses on how the idea of voice might be explored when translated from one genre to another – in this case, how a "semantic space of vocality" in Macpherson's The Poems of Ossian is refigured in Werther's "Lied d'Ossian" scene in act 3. Moving from the "archaic ballads" of Macpherson's original and the epistolary context within which the Ossian reference appears in Goethe's novel, D'Aoust highlights how in Massenet's opera the Ossianic voice – whilst framed in a separate aria distinct from the through-composed writing elsewhere in the work – is hidden through a "seamless illusion of undifferentiated singing and speech." This

revocalization has implications for how we might reconsider the real and the symbolic in operatic staging.

If vocal identity is a central issue in Massenet's Werther, then Anthony Burgess's song-cycle, The Brides of Enderby (1977) raises wider questions of authorial identity. Whilst Burgess is a relatively familiar figure in general studies of intermediality (given the musical references in his poetry, novels, and autobiographical essays, and his substantial output as a composer),[14] this particular composition offers the opportunity to explore how Burgess interprets poetry penned by his own literary persona F. X. Enderby. In unravelling the complexities of these relationships, and exploring their implications, Carly Rowley focuses upon the importance of the Muse figure within the cycle, whose contrasting personas mirror the authorial ambiguity of the entire set. By reverting to a form of the poetic text associated with a younger version of Burgess's poetic self rather than the fictitious Enderby, the penultimate song in The Brides of Enderby, "She was all brittle crystal," as Rowley suggests, represents a more personal fusion of words and music, symptomatic of this multi-layered composition.

As Maria Rovisco and Magdalena Nowicka have noted, "cosmopolitanism emerges more and more as a key analytical tool to study a variety of outlooks, processes and ethico-political practices that are observable in a variety of social and political contexts";[15] this is underlined by the recent plethora of musical studies that have applied this ideology.[16] The final article by Ryan Weber moves away from the close analysis of a specific work to explore how the literary models of Arne Garborg and Hamlin Garland might be used to reformulate our understanding of the cosmopolitanism of Grieg and MacDowell, helping to frame their cultural identities. Not only does this have implications for the composers' respective reception, but these parallel readings (encompassing Garborg's Weary Men, Grieg's "Eros," Garland's Crumbling Idols, and MacDowell's Eight Songs Op.47) identify a cultural network

of composers and writers who "manufactured a style of inbetweenness" that transcended "boundaries of time, geography and discipline."

Asserting the potential of literary criticism as an analytical tool; understanding the musical refiguring of vocality; exploring the implications of authorial identity in a composer's setting of his own literary texts; interrogating a transatlantic discourse of cosmopolitanism through music-literature parallels – these distinctive approaches to reading music through literature, applied to a range of musical genres (symphonic poem, opera, song cycle, solo song and orchestral suite) are suggestive of the wide scope and rich potential of such interdisciplinary work. Future contributions to this fascinating field of study can only be encouraged.

I should like to thank Paul Watt and Sarah Collins for their extremely generous help in assisting with the preparatory stages of this special issue.

[1] Steve Paul Scher, "Literature and Music," in Interrelations of Literature, ed. Jean-Pierre Barricelli and Joseph Gibaldi (New York: Modern Language Associaiton of America, 1982), 225-50. See also Werner Wolf, The Musicalization of Fiction: A Study in the Theory and History of Intermediality (Amsterdam: Rodopi, 1999).

[2] Scher, "Literature and Music," 229-36.

[3] Representative studies include: Mary Burgan, "Heroines at the Piano: Women and Music in Nineteenth-Century Fiction," in The Lost Chord: Essays on Victorian Music, ed. Nicholas Temperley (Bloomington IN: Indiana University Press, 1989); Allan Atlas, "George Gissing's Concertina," Journal of Musicology 17/2 (Spring 1999), 304-18; Phyllis Weliver, Women Musicians in Victorian Fiction, 1860-1900: Representations of Music, Science and Gender in the Leisured Home (Aldershot: Ashgate, 2000); Black Orpheus: Music in African American Fiction from the Harlem Renaissance to Toni Morrison, ed. Saadi A. Simawe (New York & London: Garland Publishing, 2000); Delia da Sousa Correa, George Eliot, Music and Victorian Culture (Houndmills: Palgrave Macmillan, 2003); The Idea of Music in Victorian Fiction, ed. Sophie Fuller and Nicky Losseff (Aldershot: Ashgate, 2004); Peter Dayan, Music Writing Literature, from Sand via Debussy to Derrida (Aldershot: Ashgate, 2006); Gerry Smyth, Music in Contemporary British Fiction: Listening to the Novel (Basingstoke: Palgrave Macmillan, 2008); Harry White, Music and the Irish Literary Imagination (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2008); Michelle Fillion, Difficult Rhythm: Music and the Word in E. M. Forster (Urbana: University of Illinois Press, 2010); Bronze by Gold: The Music of Joyce, ed. Sebastian D. G. Knowles (New York & Abingdon: Routledge, 2013); many of the essays in Words and Notes in the Long Nineteenth Century, ed. Phyllis Weliver and Katherine Ellis (Woodbridge: The Boydell Press, 2013); Write in Tune:

Contemporary Music in Fiction, ed. Erich Hertz and Jeffrey Roessner (New York & London: Bloomsbury, 2014); Steven C. Tracy, Hot Music, Ragmentation, and the Bluing of American Literature (Tuscaloosa: University of Alabama Press, 2015).

[4] Julie Thompson Klein and Richard Parncutt, "Art and music research," in The Oxford Handbook of Interdisciplinarity, ed. Robert Frodeman, Julie Thompson Klein and Carl Mitcham (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2010), 142.

[5] Scher, "Literature and Music," 226-29. For recent studies of "music and literature," see: Yonatan Malin, "Metric Analysis and the Metaphor of Energy: A Way into Selected Songs by Wolf and Schoenberg," Music Theory Spectrum 30/1 (Spring 2008), 61-87; Blake Howe, "The Allure of Dissolution: Bodies, Forces, and Cyclicity in Schubert's Final Mayrhofer Settings," Journal of the American Musicological Society 62/2 (Summer 2009), 271-322; Chandler Carter, "*The Rake's Progress* and Stravinsky's Return: The Composer's Evolving Approach to Setting Text," Journal of the American Musicological Society 63/3 (Fall 2010), 553-640; Rufus Hallmark, "The Literary and Musical Rhetoric of Apostrophe in Winterreise," 19th-Century Music 35/1 (Summer 2011), 3-33; Don Harrán, "Another Look at the Curious Fifteenth-Century Hebrew-Worded Motet 'Cados cados'," The Musical Quarterly 94/4 (Winter 2011), 481-517; Keith Negus, "Narrative, Interpretation, and the Popular Song," The Musical Quarterly 95/2-3 (Summer-Fall 2012), 368-95; Peter Höyng, "'The Gospel of World Harmony'; or, Beethoven's Transformation of Schiller's 'An die Freude' into World Music Literature," Modern Language Quarterly 74/2 (June 2013), 261-76. Recent examples of "literature in music" include: David J. Code, "Hearing Debussy Reading Mallarmé: Music après Wagner in the *Prélude à l'après-midi d'un faun*e," Journal of the American Musicological Society 54/3 (Fall 2001), 493-554; Laura Moore Pruett, "'Mon Triste Voyage': Sentimentality and Autobiography in Gottschalk's The Dying Poet," 19th-Century Music 36/2 (Fall 2012), 146-58; Michael Allis, British Music and Literary

Context: Artistic Connections in the Long Nineteenth Century (Woodbridge: The Boydell Press, 2012); Andrew H. Weaver, "Towards a Narratological Analysis of the Romantic Lied: Events, Voice, and Focalization in Nineteenth-Century German Poetry and Music," Music & Letters 95/3 (August 2014), 374-403.

[6] Lawrence Kramer, Music and Poetry: The Nineteenth Century and After (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1984), 127.

[7] Susan Youens, "The Grit in the Oyster, or How to Quarrel with a Poet," in Weliver and Ellis, Words and Notes in the Long Nineteenth Century, 207, 206.

[8] Christopher H. Gibbs, "'Komm geh' mit mir': Schubert's Uncanny 'Erlkönig'," 19th-Century Music 19/2 (Autumn 1995), 115-35; Michael Allis, "Musical Reactions to Tennyson: Reformulating Musical Imagery in 'The Lotos-Eaters'," in The Figure of Music in Nineteenth-Century British Poetry, ed. Phyllis Weliver (Aldershot: Ashgate, 2005), 132-73.

[9] For a definition of this programme music contract, see James Hepokoski, "Fiery-Pulsed Libertine or Domestic Hero? Strauss's Don Juan Reinvestigated", in Richard Strauss: New Perspectives on the Composer and His Work, ed. Bryan Gilliam (Durham & London: Duke University Press, 1992), 136-7.

[10] Hepokoski, "Fiery-Pulsed Libertine or Domestic Hero?", 136.

[11] See, for example, Embodied Voices: Representing Female Vocality in Western Culture, ed. Leslie C. Dunn and Nancy A. Jones (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1994); Virginia Danielson, *The Voice of Egypt: Umm Kulthūm, Arabic Song, and Egyptian Society* in the Twentieth Century (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1997); Alisa Clapp-Itnyre, "Marginalized Musical Interludes: Tennyson's Critique of Conventionality in The Princess," Victorian Poetry 38/2 (Summer 2000), 227-48; Nicky Losseff, "The voice, the breath and the soul: Song and poverty in Thyrza, Mary Barton, Alton Locke and A Child of the Jago," in

Fuller and Losseff, The Idea of Music in Victorian Fiction, 3-26; Elizabeth Helsinger, "Song's Fictions," The Yearbook of English Studies 40/1-2 (2010), 141-59.

[12] Steven Connor, "The Decomposing Voice of Postmodern Music," New Literary History 32/3 (Summer 2001), 467-83.

[13] See, for example, Carolyn Abbate, Unsung Voices: Opera and Musical Narrative in the Nineteenth Century (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1996); Gary Tomlinson, Metaphysical Song: An Essay on Opera (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1999); Peter Brooks, "Body and Voice in Melodrama and Opera," in Siren Songs: Representations of Gender and Sexuality in Opera, ed. Mary Ann Smart (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2000), 118-34; Mauro Calcagno, "Signifying Nothing: On the Aesthetics of Pure Voice in Early Venetian Opera," The Journal of Musicology 20/4 (Fall 2003), 461-97; Nina Sun Eidsheim, "Marian Anderson and 'Sonic Blackness' in American Opera," American Quarterly 63/3 (September 2011), 641-71; Michal Grover-Friedlander, "Voice," in The Oxford Handbook of Opera, ed. Helen M. Greenwald (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2014), 318-33; Suzanne Aspden, "'Sancta Cæcilia Rediviva'. Elizabeth Linley: Repertoire, Reputation and the English Voice," Cambridge Opera Journal 27/3 (November 2015), 263-87; Jelena Novak, Postopera: Reinventing the Voice-Body (Abingdon: Routledge, 2015).

[14] See Wolf, The Musicalization of Fiction, 197-215; Smyth, Music and Contemporary British Fiction, 89-93; Alan Shockley, Music in the Words: Musical Form and Counterpoint in the Twentieth-Century Novel (Farnham: Ashgate, 2009), 75-116.

[15] Maria Rovisco and Magdalena Nowicka, "Introduction," in The Ashgate Research Companion to Cosmopolitanism, ed. Novisco and Nowicka (Abingdon: Routledge, 2016), n.pag.

[16] See, for example, Stephen Feld, Jazz Cosmopolitanism in Accra: Five Musical Years in Ghana (Durham and London: Duke University Press, 2012); Motti Regev, Pop-Rock Music: Aesthetic Cosmopolitanism in Late Modernity (Cambridge: Polity Press, 2013); Rutger Helmers, Not Russian Enough? Nationalism and Cosmopolitanism in Nineteenth-Century Russian Opera (Rochester: University of Rochester Press, 2014); Catherine Jones, Literature and Music in the Atlantic World, 1767-1867 (Edinburgh: Edinburgh University Press, 2014), Chapter 2, "Cosmopolitanism and the Nation," 64-96; Hazel Smith, The Contemporary Literature-Music Relationship: Intermedia, Voice, Technology, Cross-Cultural Exchange (New York: Routledge, 2016); Tuomas Jarvenpaa, "From Gugulethu to the World: Rastafarian Cosmopolitanism in the South African Reggae Music of Teba Shumba and the Champions," Popular Music and Society (published online 20 April 2016), http://dx.doi.org/10.1080/03007766.2016.1173979 [accessed 26 September 2016].